Bradford Horton: Man

Richard S. Holmes

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By

Richard S. Holmes

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Bradford Horton: Man

A NOVEL

By
RICHARD S. HOLMES
Author of "The Maid of Honor," "The Victor," etc.



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I

A LAMP THAT NEVER GAVE LIGHT

BRADFORD HORTON looked at his watch, glanced at the clock on the bank tower, then shook his head. "Like me, too slow. This will never do. You must keep up, whether I do or not." He set the watch. Then thrusting his hand into his trousers pocket he brought out a half-dollar.

"Well, there's all I have to show for three years out of college. But I've paid my debts, and I'm not going to have any more debts. Tough? Like enough, but I'll make good. I'll make good, too, right here, in this town."

The bell of the tower clock caught his ear.

"Five o'clock. Getting late. I must make a move and find the seminary."

The day was hazy and lights already gleamed in some store windows. The young man strolled along Stanton Avenue, passed out of the business part of town and sauntered dreamily along through the beautiful residence section, enjoying the lawns, the elms, the fine houses, till he came to one of unusual elegance. Before it he seated himself on the carriage stone.

"What a fool I've been. But I'll quit. I'll win my fight. I'll show my mother ——" He rose and started hastily back towards the business district, determined to inquire for the Prestonbury Theological Seminary. Two gray squirrels on a lawn came close to him,

eyed him for a moment, then bounded up an elm. He laughed as they vanished, but a sigh followed:

"I wish I could go to the top of life as easily."

Farther on two girls were standing, evidently about to part. "That man's a stranger, Alice," one said as he passed. "A mighty good looking stranger, too."

"As your Joe would say, Lennie, the court sustains the finding."

Both laughed. "My Joe? I've no Joe, goosie. There's John Anderson, my Jo, but did you ever hear of Joe Jickerson, my Jo?" Both laughed again, and both looked after the man who had passed.

Though he heard none of this, Horton's sensitive soul surmised that the girls were discussing him, and his steps quickened. Nevertheless, he had observed the two as he passed, and made mental comment. "Head classic; eyes like wells of fire; beautiful as——" He turned for one more look at that girl, and their eyes met—hers lustrous, his dark, full and strong. His face crimsoned and he dashed down the avenue as if pursued. "Can I never be done with girls? Will they haunt me here also? Shade of Antigone! What eyes! What eyes!"

A sudden call stopped him. "Horton! Here, Horton! What you doing here? Don't you know me? Well, I know you, all right."

The appearance of the speaker was striking. His face was bright and clear and looked true, but his garb and demeanour were those of a rustic who, having had sufficient touch with cultured life to make him wish to conform to it, was yet unable to reach his own ideals. His clothes did not fit, and were not altogether of the prevailing style. Horton was a little ashamed to be seen with him.

"How are you, Horton? Don't know me yet? Well, you should—Austin Sleighton. Pulled you out of a snow-bank. Don't you remember, up on the hill by old Professor Faber's last winter? You went in head first—remember?"

"Yes, I remember." The tone of the reply was repellent. The man was a last year's senior at Catlin College, and the sled incident was still fresh in Horton's memory.

"You looked tough that morning. You surely did. You'd been trying to steer the big sled down the hill, and you didn't know the hill. Remember?"

"Yes, I remember. But that's ancient history."

"Not much. That's about the freshest ever. I've seen lots of capsizes, but never one that beat that. All of you that stuck out of the drift was your legs," and he went off into a laugh that stopped his talking, till presently he returned to his repeated question, "Remember?"

"Remember? Yes; I wish I could forget. Why do you come crowding it on me?"

"Excuse me, Horton. I didn't know you cared. I meant no offense. But that was a tough lot of men. How came you to be with that crowd?"

"Same fraternity, that's all. They asked me to an initiation, and there was too much whiskey after the show. Didn't you ever get in with such a crowd?"

"Never."

That word was a settler. They walked for a block in silence, Horton trying to devise some way to escape from his companion. Suddenly Sleighton began again:

"Ever been here before?"

"No."

"Here for long?"

"Three years."

"Seminary? Going to enter the seminary?"

"Yes." The reply was very curt.

"Where you going now?"

"Where you are, apparently, whether I want to or not."

The reply would have frozen out most men, but it did not disturb Sleighton. His answer came with the utmost good nature:

"Don't be grumpy, Horton. I'm going to enter the seminary myself. We're bound to be classmates, and we'd better be friends. Ever seen the sem?"

"No."

"Got a place to stay to-night? Got a place for supper?"

"Stay? Supper? I'll get both at the seminary, of course."

"Ho, man, that won't go. You've no room, and you can't sleep there without one, and there's no dining hall. The seminary isn't a boarding-house. The first thing here is to get a room; the next is a grub hunt."

Horton saw his chance for escape. "I'm obliged for the information, Mr. Sleighton, and I'll not bore you any more. I'll go on a grub hunt," and starting ahead at a rapid pace he left his companion behind.

But Austin Sleighton was lonesome. Even a man in a humour like Horton's was better than no one, so he ran after him, calling:

"Hold on! Wait! What's your hurry? You don't know where to go, and I do. I've found a good grub place that's only three dollars a week. Come with me. It's good; my treat, too."

Horton was hungry, and the invitation not only made him thoroughly ashamed but hungrier than he was be-

fore. He accepted, but was very ill at ease until half through the meal, when Sleighton quoted a text from Paul in Greek. That broke the ice. Horton at once replied, giving in Greek what followed, and in an entirely changed manner added: "Sleighton, I've been a fool. You've been heaping coals of fire on me, and they burn. Will you take my hand and forget?"

"Yes," was the good-natured answer, and with the hand-shake began a friendship which was to last a lifetime.

In the street Sleighton said, "Wasn't that a high-G supper? Now we'll go to the dean's and get you a room. But you'll want a lamp."

"What? Doesn't the seminary furnish lamps?"

"No; it's not a house-furnishing plant. Have to buy your own."

Horton did not answer at once, and his hesitation made Sleighton say, "What are you thinking about? Anything wrong?"

"No; I was only wondering whether I dared to ask you to let me sit in your room till bedtime? I'll have to go to bed in the dark."

"Why, no, you won't. Buy one now."

"Buy? I buy a lamp? If lamps were selling at a half-penny each I couldn't buy a quarter of one. I've just money enough to move my trunk from the station and pay for my breakfast."

Sleighton gave a low whistle. "No money? Tough. But I'll lend you money until yours comes."

In a dogged tone Horton answered, "No you don't. I'll not borrow, for I've no money coming. I'll earn what money I have."

"What'll you do?"

"Work."

"Yes, that sounds good. But what at? What can you do?"

"Saw wood, write, keep books, tutor boys, carve for a boarding-house, play ball, sing."

"Sing? What part do you sing?"

"Tenor."

"Good! You're the fellow I was going to look for to-morrow. I've got a job as organist of the Second Church, and their tenor's sick. They asked me to-day to get a student for next Sunday. It's only three dollars, but it's yours if you'll take it."

The organist took some money from his pocket. "I'll pay in advance," he said. "No loan about this. Now, we'll go buy a lamp. Let's try over yonder."

He pointed to a drug store and they crossed the street. The sign read, "John Jickers and Son. Founded in 1827." As they entered a young man met them, short in stature, alert in manner, boyish-looking. Horton and Sleighton thought him a rather fresh clerk.

"Good-evening," was his salutation. "Welcome! Strangers in this bailiwick, gentlemen? New students for the seminary, gentlemen?"

Horton acknowledged the courtesy, and asked, "Do you keep kerosene lamps?"

"Lamps for burning kerosene, do you mean? In the judgment of this court, there are no kerosene lamps. Understand? No kerosene lamps. We do not keep lamps. This is a drug house—John Jickers and Son, A. D. 1827."

"House for selling drugs, I presume you mean," said Horton gravely. "In petitioner's opinion, to follow your honour's method, there are no drug houses."

The young fellow leaned back against the counter,

and laughing, called to a tall, red-haired man farther down the store: "Oren-Toole, did you hear that? He caromed. Yes, sir; caromed on the dark red, the little old dark red."

Turning back to Horton, he continued, "Two for you, petitioner. You can score. But about lamps, we kept them once, and perhaps we may be able to find one. I'll look." Without waiting for an answer he vanished up a flight of stairs.

"Is that boy crazy?" asked Sleighton.

"No. He has some law jargon in his brain, and likes to get it off. It makes him unusual in a way, and I suppose he knows it."

As they waited the man called Oren-Toole inspected them. Horton, moved by a similar impulse, took a sharp look at him, of which the red-headed man at once became conscious. With it he was also aware of a sudden antipathy to this man with the penetrating glance.

The clerk returned presently with beaming face and a small glass lamp. "Just as I thought, gentlemen; or better, just as I hoped. You're in luck. There's not another lamp like this in this town. Superextra brand of glass. Rare, such glass. Carbonate of lead, you know. Chemistry behind this lamp, gentlemen. Unblowupable, gentlemen. Price? Only a quarter with a wick, and full of oil. Just one little old quarter."

Horton made no hesitation. With money in his pocket he was at ease for the present. "I'll take it," he said.

"Good! good!" answered the little man. "You've got something fine, and I'm pleased to have served you. Come in again. No more lamps, but lots of calomel, you know. We're John Jickers and Son; A. D. 1827.

I'm the son. Forty-eight years right on this spot. Oh, no; not I. No. John Jickers, my father. Great thing to be forty-eight years on one spot."

"Must be pretty crowded spot with that many years on it," Horton commented grimly.

At that the little man almost exploded. His laugh over, he called: "Oren-Toole, Oren-Toole, did you hear that?" Turning to Horton, he added, "You're too good a player for me, petitioner. Every pin down on the alley. Every pin. Bowled me clear out. Bowled——" His abrupt stop was caused by the entrance of a new customer. "Good-night, gentlemen; good-night."

When Joseph Jickers was once more at liberty the red-haired man came up. "J. J.," he drawled, "that was a fine pair. One was a hayseed, the other a dude."

"Court denies the motion. What's the matter with counsel?"

"That dude's the matter. Hayseed's all right. He's the stuff ministers are made of; took that lamp story all in. But Dudie! There's no parson in him. He's a Nancy boy. He ought to wear a silk jacket."

"See here, O.-T. That fellow knows something as well as you do. How he got on to my chaffing! Most new students are green as grass, but he's not. He's travelled. Don't be an idiot now. You'll live to think he's the finest man in Prestonbury."

"Never. He's a Nancy boy. I loathe that sort."

Outside the store Horton said to his new friend: "Sleighton, wait a minute. I'm going to the boarding-house to pay a week's board; after that I'll see the dean."

Sleighton went with him. The streets were not well lighted, and the night was dark. Neither man noticed a sharp depression in the sidewalk, and Horton, stum-

bling, fell headlong, hat going one way, lamp another. Horton scrambled up, and leaning against a tree laughed as if it was the funniest thing in the world. A man across the street saw the fall, and hearing the laugh commented, "Well, he's not hurt, anyway."

As Horton got to his feet he said, "Sleighton, it's go to bed in the dark after all."

The man across the street heard. "It's Nancy boy," he said, and added, "That was a Humpty-Dumpty fall, Nancy."

An hour later he sauntered into the drug store and told Joe Jickers the story. Joe's only comment was, "One fall and one broken lamp won't beat that fellow, O.-T. You'll hear more of him."

The clerk and his friend left the store together. As they were about to part Oren-Toole said in an offhand manner, "By the way, J. J., has the doctor engaged a tenor yet? You know I put my name in two weeks ago."

"No, O.-T. The doctor hasn't engaged anybody, but he has you on his mind."

"Keep his mind right there, will you, J. J.?"

II

THE FATHER OF ANTIGONE

JOSEPH JICKERS was early at his store, alert as ever, and thinking even more vigorously than usual. He found his conscience saying: "You palmed off a bit of junk on a young fellow last night. Now he's down on his luck and needs a friend. You'd better go out and straighten things up." So Joseph went out.

Bradford Horton had awakened that morning confused by unfamiliar surroundings. The dark bedroom lighted by an open door, the poor bed, the wash-stand, the coal box, gave him at first no clew to his whereabouts. But immediately memory whispered something about a man named Sleighton, about a little druggist and a lamp. He laughed, sat up, crept slowly out of bed. The night had been his first in the theological seminary, and that day would determine whether it was to be his last.

Half dressed, he went to the window and saw the campus spreading away to an avenue along which already the stream of daily business was pouring. He could hear the wheezing of a pump where a man was drawing water, and the sound suggested that he should fill his water pitcher. As he went on that errand he saw his trunk in the corridor and laughed. Back in his room he made a swift inventory of the furniture. An old Boston rocker by the table ap-

pealed to him most. It brought college vividly to mind. Presently Sleighton entered. "Hello, Horton! Not dressed yet? Grub time. Hurry up! Your exam's at nine."

Horton reëntered that room at eleven o'clock with face flushed, brain excited, his argumentative temperament thoroughly aroused. The examination was over. Whether he would be admitted or not he did not know, and hardly cared. For relief he began to sing, "If with all your hearts ye truly seek me." He was so taken with his song that he did not notice he had auditors until suddenly there was a burst of applause followed by an exclamation from Sleighton.

"Oh, Horton, what a singer you are! Who knew you could sing like that?"

"Like what?" he asked in reply, and turning saw four other men with Sleighton.

"Pardon me, old man. We were passing, heard your voice, and just had to come in. These men are classmates."

Horton greeted them cordially and Sleighton went on talking. "Have you been admitted?"

"Don't know. Don't care much. Professor Dragham told me I could retire, so I retired."

Sleighton chuckled. "Old Dragham must have put you through."

"He did; put me clear through." Then changing the subject, "Shall I sing next Sunday that song you just heard?" he asked.

"Yes. It will be great. But cool off now. Don't mind Dragham. It'll be all right," and as he spoke the five disappeared.

Alone, Horton dropped into the Boston rocker. "Oh, this is good!" he said. "And that advice was

good, too. I'll cool off." And putting his feet on the table, he lay back in the chair as if to go to sleep.

A knock roused him and a messenger boy said, "Are you Mr. Horton?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"This 'ere's fer you, then," answered the boy.

Horton took the offered package, and found in it a lamp and a note:

"MY DEAR SIR:

"Court has heard with regret of the accident and loss which petitioner sustained last night. It was due to no fault of petitioner, but wholly to the condition of our city streets. Court therefore wishes to meet his share of the responsibility as a taxpayer, and asks you to accept the accompanying lamp.

"Yours sincerely,

"J. J."

Amused, annoyed and pleased at once, acting on the impulse that seized him, Horton was in the drug store in fifteen minutes. The druggist met him as before. Horton went straight at his errand. "Are you J. J.?" he asked, holding out the note.

"Court cannot deny it," came the characteristic answer.

"Did the man who was with me last night tell you of my mishap?"

"No, petitioner."

"But you knew that I fell and broke my lamp?"

"Court acknowledges the charge."

"You are the son and partner of Dr. John Jickers, you said last night."

"Court acknowledges. I am Joseph Jickers, at your service, and commonly called Joe."

"Well, Mr. Jickers, I thank you for your courteous act. The new lamp is even better than the carbonate. But—and now please take no offense—I cannot accept the lamp as a gift. I will not be under obligations in such ways to any one. I will keep the lamp if you will permit me to pay for it; otherwise I shall return it."

Joseph Jickers was astonished. A theological student who would not accept a gift was new. He was so astonished that he made poor work of his reply.

"Court—ah—suppose that—ah—court doesn't impose any fine, you know, any costs, you know, any—ah ——"

Horton began to laugh. "Mr. Jickers, I understand you, and I want you to understand me. I appreciate your kindness, and want you to appreciate and respect my independence. I want to know the price of that lamp; you will tell me, or we shall never be friends—and I need friends sadly enough, God knows."

For a moment Joe looked at him in admiration, and when he spoke his words were free from banter.

"You are a new sort, Mr. Horton. You won't let me give you that lamp? Very well. You may pay for it. Take your own time. The price is two fifty."

As he finished he offered his hand and added, "I hope we shall know each other better."

"Thank you, Mr. Jickers. I hope so, too. Now may I presume on your kindness to say that though I would not accept help in the way you offered, there *is* a way in which I would like to be helped. I want work. Perhaps you can help along that line."

"Tough job to get work for another fellow in this town. What can you do?"

"Write, keep books, sing ——"

"Hold on, petitioner; don't go too fast. Petitioner says he can write. Will he give court a sample?" Sentiment past, the druggist had dropped back into the law jargon once more.

"Certainly."

Jickers led Horton to his own desk. "Pen, ink, paper, all ready," he said.

Bradford wrote out a promissory note for the price of the lamp. The young man took it, looked at it, then at Horton, then again at the paper. "You wrote that!" he said.

"Yes, your honour."

"Petitioner, you've no business to be in the seminary. Your business is to be in business. I guess I can get you a job. Want to go see?"

"Yes, your honour."

Joe got his hat. "Come on," he said.

They went to the Preston National Bank, and without announcement entered the cashier's office. As they passed through the banking room Horton saw that the teller was Oren-Toole, who flashed a side glance that somehow made him feel a bit uncomfortable. Introductions followed in the cashier's office.

"Mr. Maxwell," said Jickers, "I've found a man who can do that index job. Don't turn him down. You were the best penman in this city before he came. Look at this," and he produced the note. "I'll leave you now. Don't turn him down, Sam; he's a new sort."

Half an hour later Horton left the bank engaged to make a new index of depositors in the savings department, for which he was to receive twenty-five dollars. In passing through the outer office Mr. Maxwell introduced him to the teller. Each bowed, but neither

offered his hand. "I have seen Mr. Toole before," said Horton.

"Oren-Toole, if you please, sir," and the frigid reply again made Horton wince. But when the cashier said, "I have engaged Mr. Horton for the index," the look that passed over Oren-Toole's face was so plainly one of disappointment and hate that Horton could not understand it at all.

As he walked away from the bank he met the two girls whom he had seen the night before. Again the fire of the eyes of one burned into his soul. His handsome face took on a look of dissatisfaction, and he said to himself angrily: "Oh, confound girls; confound me; confound —— I thought I was coming to a paradise without a peri —— Oh, well!"

* * * * * *

At eight o'clock that evening the dean of the seminary sat in the private office of Mr. Elmore, one of the influential trustees of the institution. The first words the banker spoke led directly to the matter that had caused the dean's call.

"Anything new with you to-day, dean?"

"Yes; eighteen students, and one of them a character. I may truly say a character."

"Character? What's he done?"

"Been examined, and made a rumpus."

"What sort of a rumpus? Go ahead with your story."

"All right. He's a young fellow called Horton. He's the best Greek scholar that has ever come to us, but he's full of notions. The examination was nearly over when Dragham asked him suddenly, 'Mr. Horton,

have you had a call to the ministry?' 'I don't know,' was the answer; 'that is what I am here to learn.' Dragham saw a chance for a controversy and continued, 'What do you mean by that?' 'What my words signify,' was the answer. 'Of course, of course; but what do they signify?' 'That I do not know what you mean by having a call. If calls sound in the air, and men hear them, I have had no call, for I have heard no sound. But I expect to learn whether I am called by testing the sum of direction in my life the next three years.'

"Dragham was nonplused. 'What does that mean, Mr. Horton?' he asked once more. 'It means that any man of good endowment ought to know from the events of daily life for what he is fitted. When his observations of himself have been long enough and acute enough, he knows what God would have him do, and that constitutes a call.'"

Mr. Elmore stopped his visitor. "Say, dean, that young man has more sense than all of you on the hill. What did Dragham say to that?"

"He said, 'Then you do not believe in a call, Mr. Horton?' 'No, sir,' Horton answered, 'not as the term is ordinarily used. If I should receive a telegram to-day offering me the chair of Greek at Catlin College I would accept it. The sum of direction for the last seven years would make me sure that I was called.' 'Do we understand that you would prefer a Greek professorship to a ministry of the Gospel?' asked Dragham. 'I suggested no such thing,' answered Horton; 'I only illustrated what I meant.' 'Have you a burning, a consuming desire to preach the Gospel, Mr. Horton?' 'No, sir,' he replied. 'Have you a call to anything, Mr. Horton?' 'Yes,' came the answer, 'I have

a call to keep out of debt, and an equal call to earn what money I can without neglecting my studies.'

"'Are you not taking a rather commercial view of life, Mr. Horton? Where does the spiritual life come into your scheme?' 'At the door of no debt,' he replied—'in the seminary if possible, but if not, then out of it. My spiritual aspirations are to owe no man anything.' 'But,' objected Dragham, 'if we admit you the Board of Education will provide you with money——' Dragham got no further. Like a flash the man broke out, 'Never! Never! I'll earn my own way into the ministry, or I will not go.'

"That was the end of it. Dragham gave in. But our faculty discussion over him was lively."

"Did you admit him?"

"Yes."

"Where does this chap hail from?"

"From Glencoe, in this state."

"Glencoe? Why, I used to know a girl from that town."

Mr. Elmore mused when the dean had gone. "Glencoe? That's strange. Rosalie married a man named Horton."

On the following day Bradford Horton received a surprising note. It asked him to call that evening at 846 Stanton Avenue, and was signed Richard P. Elmore. Thinking it might mean more work, he called. As he was approaching the house he recognized it as the one on whose carriage stone he had seated himself two afternoons before. Mr. Elmore's greeting was cordial and he plunged into preliminaries without waste of time.

"I am a trustee of the seminary and interested in all the young men there. I try to make the acquaintance

of as many of them as possible. The dean has reported to me the examination you underwent yesterday and that made me particularly anxious to see you. I think, probably, you were right, but I am sure you are in advance of your times. I must caution you to be a little careful about utterances on such themes. Where is your home, Mr. Horton?"

"In Glencoe of this state."

"Is your father a banker named Henry Horton?"

"That was my father's name, but he is not living now."

"Ah! That is sad. I asked because, being a banker myself, I have known a little of him. It strikes me as somewhat strange that a banker's son should be in need of financial aid, as I gathered from the dean to be the case with you."

"That is easily explained, Mr. Elmore. My father was well to do, and I was reared in affluence. He left no will. My mother and brother were the executors and the estate has never been divided. I have only such money as my mother chooses to allow, and when I decided to study for the ministry there came a break between us, and the allowance I have had has ceased."

"That is surely unfortunate, Mr. Horton. Of course the break can be only temporary, but while it lasts it is unfortunate. What did you say was your mother's name?"

"I did not say. But it is Rosalie Morwell Horton."

Little by little, cautiously, tentatively, this man of the world worked his way into the confidence of the young man. The story he told was full of interest to his auditor.

"When I entered college I intended to become a lawyer, and I studied for three years, keeping entirely

away from society. The only social recreation I allowed myself was that which came from being connected with a church choir in the village. I sang in it for three years. In my last year I met and became engaged to a young girl and, I regret to say, neglected my college work and lost the valedictory which every one supposed I had already won. This displeased my mother.

"Shortly after graduating I was engaged as leader for the choir where I had been singing, and went back to Gaston so that I might be near my fiancée. There I began the study of law. Over this my mother and I had a serious quarrel. I failed in Gaston, neglecting both my choir and law books for the girl. I ran deeply in debt, and in the spring, when I was at the end of my rope, there came an order from my mother to accept a position as teacher in a school for boys not far from New York. I went, and for a year and a half worked as hard as any one could. Then my—my fiancée died. For another year I taught and saved enough to pay all my Gaston debts, and formed the purpose of entering the ministry, and over this decision my mother and I have quarrelled bitterly. Perhaps she is right; I do not know, but here I am, and here I will stay until I know whether God wishes me to preach or not."

Neither spoke for some time after this recital, but at last Mr. Elmore broke the silence with a question. "Would you have married the Gaston girl had she lived?"

"Surely," was the answer.

"That answer has the right ring, Mr. Horton. You say your mother will not help you at all."

"Not at all."

"Well, I will. You want work, and I will give it.

My grandson wishes to enter Yale next autumn and has not Greek enough, and cannot get it in our schools. The dean has spoken highly of you as a Greek scholar. You shall have my grandson to tutor for five days each week, an hour a day, and I will give you a dollar for every lesson."

Bradford thanked him and rose to go. "Don't go yet, Mr. Horton. I have another thing to say. Take no offense now. You need ready money for books and other things, and I will provide it, not as a gift but as a loan, on your promissory note. You must pay me interest regularly and the principal within a year of your graduation. In this way you can maintain your self-respect."

As he finished speaking the banker took from a drawer five ten-dollar notes. "Take these, please, Mr. Horton, and sign this note."

Bradford signed and took the money. He wanted to refuse, but dared not. Something about this gentleman awed even his independent spirit. Rising quickly, he said, "Good-night."

Passing out of the office he saw in the library, reading, the girl with the beautiful eyes. She saw him also, and looked surprised.

"Antigone," he thought, "and her present-day name is Elmore."

III

TO AN OLD-TIME SWEETHEART

"FATHER, who was that?"

"One of my annuals, dear."

Mr. Elmore had followed his caller to the hall and, returning, had stopped behind his daughter's chair. She was reading "Sartor Resartus." "How do you and Thomas come on, Lennie?"

"Finely. What was his name, father?"

"Teufelsdrockh. I should not think you would ask with the book in your hand."

"Oh, bother Teufelsdrockh! I wasn't asking about him, and you know it. What is his name?"

She had drawn her father down to the arm of her chair, where he sat looking with mingled love and admiration at her strength and beauty. Instead of answering her question, he began, "'A rose by any ——'"

"Stop, daddy; men are not roses. What is the annual's name?"

"You haven't usually asked their names."

"No. Usually they're stupid—this one's handsome. That's why."

"Handsome, is he? You saw it at a glance, it seems, but I didn't notice it, though he sat with me a half hour."

"Oh, you're a man; and besides, I've seen him twice before."

"You have? Where did you meet him?"

"Haven't met him. I've seen him. Look here, father! Do you suppose a man like him can come into sleepy old Prestonbury and be here three days without every girl in town knowing it?"

"When did you see him, Eleanor?"

"Day before yesterday. Alice Lee and I were standing by her house and he passed. And he's good-looking, daddy. Alice says so, and she knows. Then yesterday I saw him come out of our bank. What's his name, father?"

"Well, dear, it's Horton; Bradford Horton. But this won't do for me. I must go to work."

He rose to go back to his office. "Wait, father!" She caught his arm as she spoke. "Is he poor?"

"I rather think he is," answered the man.

"What made you keep him in your office so long? Did he tell you his history?"

"Part of it. But never mind him, Lennie. I don't want you thinking about men until after our foreign trip. Good-bye. I'm off."

"Men are funny," she laughed. "What made father bother so about his name?"

She took up her book once more, but did not read long, for the butler brought the cards of two callers, Joseph Jickers and B. Oren-Toole. "Take these to Mrs. Elmore," she said to the butler, as she started for the parlour.

Mrs. Elmore came presently, and taking the chair that her daughter had vacated, apparently occupied herself with the book lying on the table, while really she listened to the talk in the parlour, of which there was never a lack where Joe Jickers was. The parlour soon became very noisy, and Mrs. Elmore did not know whether she was displeased or not.

"How long before the cell door will open to receive the Prestonbury culprit?" she heard Joe ask. Then came Oren-Toole's voice: "Now, J. J., what's the cell door, and who's the Prestonbury culprit?"

"Oh, I'm the culprit," answered the girl, "and the cell is my room in college. You know I go back to Vassar in ten days."

"Will that heaven be full of angels this autumn, your honour—I mean your honouress? I want to know, for I want one angel, just one little one. I don't want to be an angel, but I want to own one with pink ears and ruby lips and eyes like a gazelle's, and hair the colour of the raven's wing. Eh, Lennie? Any such down there?"

In such fashion the stream of nonsense flowed, and in the midst of it Oren-Toole went to the piano and began to sing. Suddenly he whirled on the piano stool and called abruptly: "J. J., I owe you one; yes, I owe you more than one. You put me in a hole yesterday."

"Not guilty, your honour."

"You did. You brought Nancy boy into the bank, and he took the job of indexing."

"What of it? How did that hurt you?"

"How? I told Maxwell not an hour before I would do it in overtime for a hundred and twenty-five dollars. You brought Nancy boy in, and after looking at the work what do you think he offered? Just twenty-five! It made me look like a robber. Maxwell snapped him up as a frog does a fly. Put me in a fine light. Maxwell thinks, I suppose, I was trying to play him for a flat."

"Court sustains the opinion," said the druggist.

"J. J., I'll put a rod in pickle for Nancy boy, and don't you forget it."

"You make me curious," said Eleanor. "Who is Nancy boy? And I'm disappointed in you, Mr. Oren-Toole. I never supposed you had a bad temper."

"Nor have I, Miss Elmore. My temper is good—so good it will get even with a man I don't like."

"Is there some one you do not like, and you call him Nancy boy? That's a funny name for a man."

"You have it right. I do not like Nancy boy. He's a new student. Ask J. J. about a lamp he sold him. But I'll do him worse than J. J. did."

Joe saw it was time to stop this talk, and did it by telling the lamp story in full, giving both first and second acts, but omitting Horton's name. Eleanor noticed the omission.

"What's the matter with you men?" she asked. "Why don't you tell me the name of this disturber of Mr. Oren-Toole's peace? Don't you mean to tell me?"

Both men answered, "Bradford Horton."

"Is he the man I saw leaving the bank yesterday morning?" she asked the teller.

"Miss Elmore, a good many men left the bank yesterday morning, and which one you saw I don't know. But if he was tall and empty-handed and acting as if he thought he was the best looking man in Prestonbury, then I reckon your man's my Nancy boy."

"He's the fellow, Lennie," broke in Joe. "New type of fellow. O.-T. there don't like him, but the new type doesn't know it, and if he did he wouldn't care. Independent? I should say. And brains? He'll stir that old seminary up before three years pass. Don't fool yourself, O.-T. Bradford Horton's no Nancy boy."

At this juncture Mrs. Elmore came into the parlour. "Eleanor," she began, "was not that the man who came to see your father to-night?"

"Was there a man here, mother? Come to think of it, I believe there was. Did you see him, mother?"

"No. But I am sure that is the name of the man your father expected. If it is, he made a great sensation yesterday."

"That's the man, Mrs. Elmore. Dr. John Jickers—1827, you know—says he did stir things up in great shape."

Oren-Toole tried to begin another of his bitter comments on Horton, but the druggist prevented. "Can't talk any more to-night, Ory. Court must adjourn," and rising, he bade Mrs. Elmore good-night, and turning swiftly to Eleanor added, "Good-night, angel catcher."

"Shall I see you again before I go?" asked the girl.

"You may, your honour, and you may not. If not, give the angels in that little Vassar heaven a message from a citizen of this wicked world. Tell them an aching heart by early friendship scorned awaits the healing balm ——"

"Joe, you're absurd! Do you mean that I scorn you? Never! It is you who have scorned me. If I die of a broken heart you'll know who's to blame. Like enough then you'll weep."

"Oh, I'll weep now, madonna, I'll weep now," and producing a red silk bandanna he began to mop his face. As he passed out of the door into the night, waving the handkerchief, he called:

> "An aching heart by early friendship scorned
> Waits for angelic beauty, unadorned."

The echo that floated in past the closing door was Joseph Jickers's laugh. As the girl turned away with

her smile at Joe still playing over her beautiful face her mother shook her head reprovingly. "Will you never be serious with callers, Eleanor?" she said.

"How can any one be serious with Joe, momsy? If he should take himself seriously for five minutes he'd have an ague chill. If the other man had been here alone, and had talked about Mr. Horton as he did, I would have been serious enough to make his red hair white."

"That troubles me, too, Eleanor—that Oren-Toole. He comes here too often. He has been here five times during your vacation."

"That isn't often. Don't worry, momsy. He's good fun, but if the world was full of Oren-Tooles I wouldn't look a second time at one of them. Not much fun in him to-night, though. He has taken an absurd dislike to that Mr. Horton, and it made him grumpy."

"But, Eleanor, why can't you settle down and be serious with Mr. Jickers? He has family, good business, wealth, manners, and we know all about him. Why won't you marry Joe, Eleanor?"

Eleanor laughed as she answered. "Oh, momsy, you're funny, indeed you are! I marry Joe? How can I till he asks me? And he'll never do that. If he should"—and she punctuated the sentence with a ringing laugh—"if he should, he'd have me founded in 1827, or pleading guilty, or confessing judgment, or he'd take himself away by habeas corpus whenever he left in the morning. Joe's jolly, but who wants to marry a walking joke?"

Mr. Elmore's own hearty laugh prevented his wife's reply. He had come from his office unnoticed, and had heard the last two speeches. "Why, Emily, Joe couldn't be serious long enough to propose to any girl,

let alone marrying her. And as for Lennie, she can't marry until we return from Asia."

The little family party broke up after that. The father returned to his office, the mother went up-stairs and the daughter to the library and her book. But Carlyle had lost his charm for that night. She threw down the book and started for her own room.

"He is good looking, anyway," she said.

* * * * * *

On Mr. Elmore's desk lay a paper on which he had written a name and address:

"Mrs. Rosalie Horton, Glencoe, New York.—Dear Rosalie:—"

To write this much was easy, but a flood of memories rushing over him had stopped the pen. He was a boy once more, a student in his senior year at college in a town where was also a girls' seminary. On Sunday mornings the girls in attendance sat in one gallery of the old stone church and the students from the college in the other. So it happened that Dick Elmore and Rosalie Morwell faced each other across the church for almost the whole of a college year, and each had selected the other as the best looking in the group long before they met. After they had met, Dick called on Rosalie whenever the seminary calling night came. He called again, and then again, and before the college year was ended they were engaged.

It was a halcyon time for both, but it passed with the year. Rosalie went home to Glencoe, Dick to Prestonbury and into his father's law office. What happened then? No one can answer. The psychology of a broken first engagement is better left unwritten. Like a fog that lifts, like a dream that fades, like embers

that die, the little romance of Dick and Rosalie ended. He forgot it presently and was happy. She married Henry Horton and became the social leader of her community; but there was a little nook in her heart where resentment lived on through the long years.

Richard Elmore thought of this past as he sat looking at the address he had written. A good impulse was in his heart, for he wanted to bring mother and son together. He saw the possibility; the effort was worth making, and taking up his pen he wrote rapidly:

"Bradford has been with me to-night for an hour. What a handsome fellow he is! By chance only I came across him. I help two or three of our worthy young students each year, and having heard of him as one specially gifted, I sent for him, not knowing he was your son. I learned that after he came, and he does not know that you and I were ever acquainted.

"I made him tell his story—a sad one, too. Rosalie, can you not forgive him? We drifted apart long ago, you and I—I never knew how. May I not come back into your life now enough to bring mother and son to reconciliation? Over that my joy would be great. Perhaps what I saw of you in him is what moves me so, for I confess memory has stirred me deeply to-night. Hoping I may be of service, real service, to you and your boy, I am yours most cordially,

"Richard P. Elmore."

He went to his room, hoping that his wife was asleep. He did not want her to ask what he had been doing. But she was awake. "Richard, what have you been doing?" she inquired.

Reluctantly he answered, "Writing, Emily."

"Writing what?"

"A letter."

"It must have been long."

"Not very."

There was silence for a while. He hoped she had dropped asleep. Presently he heard her voice. "Richard, is that all you have to say about that letter?"

"What more can I say, Emily?"

"Don't you know? Don't you know to whom you wrote, and about what?"

That was enough. He surrendered, and told the whole story.

"What a letter!" she ejaculated. "Come back into her life! She doesn't want you within sight of her life."

"But, Emily, she'll know what I mean. I only want to bring her and her son together."

"See here, Richard, my advice to you is not to send that letter. Give it to me in the morning; I'll take care of it."

"Can't do it, Emily. I sent Tom to the post-box with it before I came up."

"What a fool you can be sometimes, Richard. That woman will be furious when she reads it. Oh, don't shake your head. Don't tell me I'm hard. I know women."

IV

A CARNATION FOR A SONG

SATURDAY NIGHT Tom Wilson, basso of Second Church, met young Jack Tappan, a First Church man. "Hello, Jack! Be in our church to hear your preacher candidate to-morrow?"

"You bet. He's bang up. Father heard him in Claremont."

"Well, if he can preach as well as the fellow can sing who'll be our tenor to-morrow he's a hummer."

"Who is the tenor?"

"New student. Fellow named Horton."

This sidelight shows why Second Church was full even to the galleries next morning.

In the front row of the gallery sat Oren-Toole. Surprise and scorn were on his face as he saw Horton enter the choir. Maxwell, equally surprised, whispered to his wife, "That's the man I hired two days ago to make my index. Hope he can sing as well as he can write."

The Elmores were there, and Horton saw them instantly. As iron flies to the magnet his eyes sought those of Eleanor Elmore, and as their eyes met his face flushed, but hers did not. Her only thought was, "So father's new annual is a singer!"

As the service moved forward towards the time for his solo Horton grew nervous, but it was only the flickering of a fire that was sure to burst into a brilliant flame.

The congregation long remembered that offertory. There would have been applause had it not been the Sabbath, but the solemn silence was even more thrilling than sound. In the midst of the song the organ stopped. Sleighton, absorbed in listening, had forgotten his part. Oren-Toole noticed it, and muttered, "Part of the show." The singer paid no attention to the stopping of the accompaniment, but with full, clear tones sent his words ringing through the auditorium until the closing phrase, "Thus saith the Lord."

Eleanor Elmore was surprised and deeply affected by the song, and sat motionless, almost breathless, through it all. She was not alone in her feeling. The preacher was even more moved than she. His action was almost dramatic. Beginning his sermon with a prayer, he passed almost imperceptibly into colloquial address utterly regardless of conventionalities.

"Good friends, I know, of course, why I am here today, what your expectations are and what I had purposed. I shall gratify neither you nor myself. I care nothing for the outcome to myself of this day. The singer has given me my message."

Fifteen minutes sufficed him. Prestonbury never before had heard so short a morning sermon. People remained standing in devotional attitude after the benediction, apparently loath to leave the church. The organ broke the spell. One and another went forward to speak to the preacher, but the majority passed quietly out of the building.

Among the latter were Mr. Elmore and Mr. Maxwell. On the steps outside the latter paused. "I shall wait for the ladies," he said.

"That's the index man, isn't it, Sam? That singer, I mean."

"Yes."

"You said twenty-five, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Give him fifty."

"All right."

"We've got to call that preacher, Sam."

"I guess so."

"Got to hire the tenor, too. Our teller has applied for the place, but he won't do. Good-bye."

Presently the ladies came, and with them Oren-Toole, who was in a tumultuous mood. He had considered himself something of a singer until this morning, and Horton's ability, which he instantly recognized, made him angrier than he had been over the index matter. He knew his dream of being engaged for the vacancy at the "Old Furnace" had vanished into thin air. But though angry, he was outwardly calm. He took his place by Eleanor's side, and they all walked on together. They went a dozen rods without speaking, then Eleanor broke the silence:

"I see you have been moved, too, Mr. Oren-Toole."

"Yes, Miss Elmore. I have been moved."

"I do not wonder." She turned her lovely face towards him, eager, expectant. "It was wonderful."

"It? Don't you mean 'they'?"

"They? Who?"

"Why, the singer and the preacher. Did you not see how they played together to the galleries?"

She turned to him quickly in indignant astonishment. "How can you!" she exclaimed. "Those men play to the galleries? No! They made me feel as if the door into the presence of God had been opened before my face."

"Stage play—nothing but stage play, Miss Elmore."

"I thought you liked music, Mr. Oren-Toole."

"So I do, Miss Elmore. I love music."

"Well, that was music, real music, such as one rarely hears."

"The singer has an eloquent champion, Miss Elmore. But did you not feel the pure sensationalism of the performance?"

"Performance? That was no performance. It was the throb of a human heart. It pulsed and thrilled with life."

"All done for effect, Miss Elmore. Every note and tone and modulation was measured. He has probably done it elsewhere for the same reason."

"What reason, Mr. Oren-Toole?" Eleanor looked him full in the face. The fire flashing in her eyes should have warned him, but he blundered jealously on.

"A bid for a choir job. Just like an auctioneer calling 'How much am I offered?'"

"For shame!" cried Eleanor hotly. "For shame, Mr. Oren-Toole! I remember what you said the other night at our house about disliking Mr. Horton, but I did not know you could be so mean." And with a sudden step forward she joined Mrs. Maxwell, leaving him to follow by himself.

Rage though he might inwardly, he could not show it. Eleanor's move had been made so quickly and emphatically that he could not explain. He walked on a little way, but after a short distance turned towards his hotel, a very angry man.

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The preacher turned to the choir loft to speak with the singer after the benediction, but he was nowhere to be seen. He had hurried to a side entrance to avoid

meeting people, and would have gone away alone if Joseph Jickers had not anticipated Horton's action and waited at the side door.

"I am going to take you to dinner," he said, and slipping his arm into Horton's he led him away. When they reached the Jickers home Joe took his guest to his own room. "You'll not be disturbed," he said. "I'll call you for dinner."

Horton, weary with the strain, threw himself on the bed and fell asleep. The next thing he was conscious of was that some one was shaking him. "Let me alone, Sleighton," he grumbled sleepily; "I'm tired."

"Mistaken identity, petitioner. Court is not Sleighton. You've been asleep an hour, and it's bread and water time. Wake up! You sleep like one of the ancient seven."

As Bradford made ready for dinner the little man talked. "You're going to meet my father, my mother, my sister, Miss Lucy Jickers, and my brother, Ansley Jickers, esquire. That's the family. And, petitioner, they've brought home the minister. Can you stand it, or shall I have your dinner sent up?"

Bradford laughed. "I can stand it. I am ready." And they went down-stairs to join the family.

Ansley Jickers saw at first glance that the singer was wearing the emblem of his own college fraternity. A bright, pleased look passed over the face of the lawyer as he stretched out his hand to Horton, and his hearty grip told the young man that there was a strong bond between them. He was sure of one loyal friend now.

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When Bradford entered the east corridor of Morton

Hall late that afternoon the sound of Sleighton's organ made him stop. As he opened the door Sleighton jumped from his chair and grasped him by the shoulders. "Oh, it was great," he cried—"great! But where did you go? You shouldn't run away so."

"Sleighton, can you play 'Robin Adair'?"

"Of course. What's that got to do with it? I tell you, man ——"

"Play it, will you?"

"Yes, in a minute. What's the rush? Don't you care what folks said about your song?"

"Yes, I care. I'm pleased as I can be. But I couldn't face the crowd. Young Jickers found me as I was making off and took me home with him. He has a mighty fine sister, Sleighton. And say! his father went to school with my father. The minister was there, too, and wants me to sing 'Nearer, my God, to Thee' to 'Robin Adair' to-night."

A white carnation lay on Horton's hymn-book that night; no note, no explanation, just the flower. He thought Lucy Jickers had sent it, and placed it in his buttonhole. He sang with the same power as in the morning, with the result that before the week's end he was engaged to sing for Second Church for the months of the seminary year for three hundred dollars. The young man's financial prospects were brightening.

* * * * * *

On Tuesday following this eventful Sunday cards were issued by Miss Elmore for a musicale on Friday evening, and Horton was honoured. The invitation was received on Tuesday afternoon just after recitations for the day were over. He sat in the old chair, with his feet on the table, and thought of the events of the

week. "Lucky? That's what you are." So his thought ran. "You landed in this town a week ago to-morrow, no home, no friends, no prospects. The first man to whom you spoke gave you a plum; the next put a whole basketful into your hands; the banker added to the pile, and one Sunday in church brought three hundred dollars for eight months' work. Yes, and there's the boy you're tutoring. As for friends, why, every man you've met has spoken as if he'd known you always, except that Toole in the bank. What's the matter with him, anyway? But this invitation from the banker's daughter? No, no, my lady! You can't play me like a trout. I'll take all the work that will bring me money, but I'll run no chance of throwing my good resolutions to the winds by running after girls."

His meditation was broken by Sleighton, who, throwing open the door, rushed into the room fairly shouting, his card for the musicale in his hand.

"Horton! Oh, say, Horton! That song of yours has done the business. Look here! Card for a musicale. Miss Elmore's, you know. It's immense, Horton. It's—say! it's the swellest place, and she's the prettiest girl in this city. What'll you sing, Horton?"

"Nothing. I'm not going."

"Not invited?"

"Yes. But I'm not going."

The answer astonished the enthusiastic organist. He looked at his friend in dumb amazement for a moment. "Not going? Why, man, you —— Not going? But you can't, don't you know? You can't, don't you see?"

"Can't what, A. S.?" Horton was laughing.

"Can't stay away. Can't send regrets. It will

never do, Horton. You are a stranger, going to be here three years, going to sing in the 'Old Furnace,' going to be part of the life of the town. Don't you see? Mr. Elmore about owns this town, and that party is his daughter's party."

"That's all right, A. S. But he doesn't own me, and his daughter doesn't, and I'll not go to the party."

"Why, you're crazy, Brad! Don't be a mule."

"All right, A. S. I won't be a mule, and I won't be a fool, either. That's what I will be if I accept this invitation."

Sleighton argued, but Horton was firm. "I tell you, Austin Sleighton, I won't go. I came here to study for the ministry, not to study girls. I've studied them too much already, but I've learned my limitations by the study. That girl is Antigone. She made men lose their heads twenty-five centuries ago, and she almost made me lose mine last Sunday morning. I'll not give her another chance. I'll not go to her party. You can take my regrets, but you can't take me."

V

SETTING A SNARE

"SO My Lady has come to her senses," was Oren-Toole's comment on receiving Miss Elmore's card, and his tone showed that his pleasure was unmistakable. Sunday night he had met her face to face in the vestibule of the church, and although she bowed, her manner was frigid. Sunday's blunder gave him a rather blue Monday, but Tuesday brought the invitation, and a broad, warm smile lit up his face. She was not hopelessly offended.

During the following day he paid little attention to Horton, but on Thursday, when Bradford reached the bank, curiosity to know whether the student was also to be one of the Elmore guests made him speak.

"I suppose you will be at Miss Elmore's musicale," he said tentatively.

"Is Miss Elmore to have a musicale?" was the reply.

"Yes. Didn't you know it? I suppose then you will not be there."

"You seem to suppose that I will and that I will not almost in the same breath. Why should you suppose anything about me?"

"I supposed you would be invited because you are a singer. I suppose you'll not be there because you are not invited."

"Who told you I was not invited?"

"You."

"Did I? When?"

"Didn't you say you didn't know Miss Elmore was to have a musicale?"

"No."

"You didn't?"

"No."

"Wasn't that your meaning when you asked, 'Is Miss Elmore to have a musicale?'"

"No."

"What did you mean?"

"Nothing."

"See here! Are you an idiot?"

"I think not. We are not relatives."

The teller flushed angrily, but he changed his tone. With sarcastic self-control he asked, "Have you been invited to Miss Elmore's musicale, Mr. Horton?"

"Yes, I have. Had you asked that question first you wouldn't have lost your temper."

That was too much for Oren-Toole. He turned from Horton to his own work, angry to the crown of his red head. Horton, writing steadily, was asking himself, "Who is this Oren-Toole? What has he against me?" Later he learned the story of the man's birth, ambitions, and disappointments and the causes of his hatred.

Oren-Toole was an Irishman who had been born at Devil's Spring, only a few miles from Prestonbury. His father's name was Dennis O'Toole, and Bridget was his mother. The Prestonbury priest had christened him Barney. The boy's home was a shanty, and his father a common labourer, who worked with his paddy shovel whenever a man with such an implement was in demand. Bridget, at home, worked barefoot by day and smoked her pipe with Dennis at night.

Barney was the oldest of the children, and was easily

boss and tyrant over all. None of the little O'Tooles save Barney showed any ambition to be more than were the father and mother. But Barney was different. "Do ye's kids think it's stayin' here I'd be allus? I'll be red-headed and an Irishman allus, but I'll not wurruk wid a shovel. I'm goin' into business, an' I'm goin' ter have money."

Devil's Spring could not keep him after he was twelve. He announced to his father one day, "I'm goin'." Bridget cried more than Barney liked, but without avail. His father accepted it like a philosopher. "Goin' ye are, Barney? Well, me b'y, be lavin' the dhrink alone. Ye'll niver foind yer way till the top o' the warl' through a whusky bottle." And Barney heeded. Drinking was never one of his faults.

Behold, now, this twelve-year-old Barney O'Toole early one autumn morning trudging to Claremont, thirty miles away. A sturdy heart was beating under the little Irishman's shabby exterior, and his resolution to succeed was strong. He had slept his last sleep in the shanty at Devil's Spring.

At Claremont he found work in a newspaper office. "From Devil's Spring you come, eh? Well, we'll make a 'printer's devil' of you," said the manager. But Barney was too ambitious to be "printer's devil" long. In two months he was in a real estate office; in three years in the First National Bank. He was then past fifteen, and the evolution had begun which was to produce Mr. Bernard Oren-Toole, descendant of the Oren-Tooles, who had been chief patrons of St. Patrick of blessed memory. The process was not rapid, but tactful from the beginning. By the time the Preston National Bank chose him its teller his new name was well established. Occasionally Claremont people with

good memories would laugh and say, "Mr. Oren-Toole? Oh, yes! That's little Irish Barney, who used to run errands for *The Standard*." But no one objected to the ambition which had enabled him to climb from Irish errand boy to popular young man about town.

When he went to Prestonbury he was received for what he claimed to be, and only one person in the city knew the truth. That was Ansley Jickers. Claremont was a large city and had afforded Barney many opportunities. He had embraced them all, and had acquired a good degree of culture. He could sing, tell a story well and play the piano. He had a keen sense of humour and much social grace. Roman Catholic by birth, religion was but a secondary matter with him, and Mr. B. Oren-Toole, in spite of his ancestral relations to St. Patrick, speedily became Protestant by adoption, and at the time Bradford Horton met him he was a regular attendant at the "Old Furnace." As teller of the Preston National Bank he was efficient, and in society generally popular.

* * * * * *

"Friend, give me a dime; I'm hungry."

"Not a dime. You're not my friend, and you're not hungry. You're thirsty."

The beggar was standing near the bank when Oren-Toole went out for dinner on Friday, the day of Miss Elmore's musicale. He was old, shabbily dressed and unattractive, but the tone of his voice and his language betokened one of higher grade than the ordinary tramp. Something about him touched the sympathy of the teller, in spite of his rough speech, and he listened to the old man's response:

"You're wrong, my dear sir. I am hungry. Were you never hungry?"

"Yes, you poor devil. I've been hungry, and it's not nice. Come! I'll give you a square meal, but it'll be where you can't get a drink."

He led the way to a restaurant, and entering said, "Sylvester, give this man his dinner; I'll pay for it." Turning to the old man he added, "You wait here until I come back. I'll have a job for you."

Oren-Toole had thought rapidly during the walk to the restaurant, and a plan for satisfying his wrath at Horton had suddenly presented itself. To make it effective he would need help, and this old beggar now under obligation to him seemed exactly the one needed. When, after his own dinner, he had the beggar in the street once more, he began: "See here, my man! Do you want to earn ten dollars?"

"Yes."

"You do? Listen! This is the corner of State Street and Stanton Avenue. Can you remember that?"

"Yes."

"Will you come here at eight o'clock to-night?"

"Yes."

"Remember; be here at eight o'clock and I'll give you a ten-dollar job. Get out, now. Don't let the police see you hanging around this bank."

With that the teller went inside. Horton's bank hours were from 12:30 to 3:30. His desk was next to the teller's counter, with only a glass partition between. In the intervals of the afternoon Oren-Toole, with some ostentation, made up a package containing two thousand dollars, and Horton saw the whole proceeding, as the teller intended.

About two o'clock Mr. Elmore came in and took

Maxwell to drive. Besides Oren-Toole, the other men of the bank force were Hobbs, the bookkeeper, and a boy called Billy. At a quarter before three the teller said to Horton, "Do you know anything about bookkeeping, bank balances, and all that?"

"Yes."

"Would you be willing to close the books for Hobbs to-day? There's to be a mighty good ball game this afternoon, and he and Billy want to go."

Pleased and surprised at the teller's request, Bradford consented, and the two clerks started away. At three o'clock Oren-Toole shut the bank doors and, saying he had an errand that would keep him perhaps a quarter of an hour, went out.

"I'll come back in time to look after things," he said.

Outside he found the old man leaning against the corner of the building.

"You here!" he broke out. "I told you to-night at eight. Clear out. Don't let any one in the bank see you here. If you do you'll lose that ten dollars. Move now." The old man obeyed.

Oren-Toole did not return until half-past three, and met Horton just passing out.

"I waited, Mr. Oren-Toole, as long as I could," said Horton. "I have to be at class promptly at four to-day because of a special appointment."

"That's all right," was the reply. "I'll look after things."

His method of looking after things was interesting. First from old newspapers he cut pieces the size of bank bills, enough to make a bundle as large as the package of money on the counter. This he marked "Preston Plow Company" and put into the safe.

Next he pocketed the package containing the money, locked the safe and left the bank. "I'm dead sure to make it go," he said as he closed the door behind him.

Although he was somewhat nervous through the rest of the day, and kept calling himself a fool for taking such a risk, he did not think of abandoning his purpose. He dressed with scrupulous care and went out for the evening. The old man came promptly to the rendezvous.

"Well, you're here, all right," said the teller. "Now listen! There's a girl in this town who is dead gone on a young fellow in the seminary, and she wants to make him a present without his knowing. She wants it to be hid in his room. It'll be a surprise when he finds it. She asked me to help her, and I told her I would. Here is the present."

He pulled the package from his pocket. "They're handkerchiefs, I guess, from the feeling. The fellow lives in Room 35, Morton Hall. I'll show you where that is. I want you to hide this package in that room. Can you do it?"

"Not if he's in the room."

"Oh, he's going out to a party to-night. You wait in the corridor in the dark till you see him go. Slip in, hide the package, and get out. It won't take you five minutes. Are you game?"

"Yes. But you're giving big pay for such a job. What's up?"

"Up? Nothing. The girl's daft. Her father's the richest man in this town, and ten dollars is nothing to her. Going to back out?"

"No, I'm not. But there are some fools left yet in this world."

"You've nothing to do with the fools. Just take care you're not one of 'em."

By this time they were walking rapidly in the direction of the seminary. At the door of Morton Hall Oren-Toole paused in the shadow. "I'll wait here," he said. "You do as I've told you and you'll get what's coming to you. See?" He showed the corner of a ten-dollar bill.

The old man nodded, winked craftily, and disappeared in the unlighted part of the corridor, out of reach of the rays of the lamp at the entrance. Oren-Toole retired a little way to the shelter of a tree. This business should not take long, he calculated. Either Horton would have gone already, in which case his hireling would return immediately; or he soon would go, and then Oren-Toole could watch his departure.

Five minutes passed and then the figures of both Sleighton and Horton were silhouetted against the light at the door. "That's all right," Oren-Toole was thinking, when to his horror he heard Horton call after the organist as the latter passed out alone into the night, "Good-bye! I'll be up when you get home."

Oren-Toole was not usually profane, but a smothered oath passed his lips as Sleighton walked rapidly away and Horton returned into the building. "Dished!" he added, and fell to pondering what was to be done. Probably the old man would have seen what he himself had seen and would return shortly, his errand unaccomplished. "I'll wait here till he comes," he thought. At all events he was in ten dollars. All he would now need to do was to provide the old fellow with a night's lodging.

Under his tree he waited, and waited, and waited. Fifteen minutes were gone and still the old man did

not come. He was growing rather nervous. He foresaw that he would be late in arriving at Miss Elmore's. He twisted his hands in his pockets and tried to quiet his active brain, very much alive to all the possibilities of disaster that might ensue from the way events had turned out. "Why couldn't he go along to the party as any sensible chap would!" he grumbled.

A half hour had elapsed. "I can't wait here for that old fellow much longer. Good Lord!" as a new thought struck him. "Can he have gone to investigating the package and be waiting for a chance to make off with it?"

The dilemma was distressing enough. Should he enter the building, find and collar the old rascal and accuse him of theft, explanations would follow that would make his position unpleasant. Should he wait where he was, however long, until the old man was either thrown out as a tramp, or came out of his own accord, he would miss the musicale, and questions would be asked, and when the money was missed at the bank in the morning, some connection would be made between its disappearance and his own non-appearance at Miss Elmore's. No! He must be seen there at all hazards. It would help him to brazen through the investigation that he now felt, unhappily, was sure to come.

"I'll go up to Sunset Hill, stay a while, leave fairly early and then hunt up my man. I'm sure to find him somehow. Anyway, I'd best trust to luck. I'll bluff it through to-morrow. But I can't unless I act like myself to-night," and as he reluctantly left and made his way to the Elmore residence he tried over and over to reassure himself with the idea that he would certainly be able to find his man before the opening of

the bank to-morrow. His arguments were specific enough. At any rate, he felt he had chosen the least of several evils.

By a mighty effort he managed to put away his nervous wonderings and his racking suspense, and to appear his usual gay and lively self. Joe Jickers bantered him on being the slave of fashion in arriving so late. "I've been taking pity on the poor," was the sprightly answer. Gradually he was convincing himself that the old man must still be waiting in the corridor of Morton Hall for a chance to do his errand. "He wanted that ten dollars bad," he thought; "he's cornered there for all the evening." His spirits were gradually rising to their normal level.

Jack Tappan picked him up presently and introduced him to Austin Sleighton.

"Glad to met you, Mr. Sleighton. I think I saw you in the drug store one night."

"Yes, I remember," was the reply.

"What is your friend Horton going to sing to-night?" was the next question.

"Nothing," responded Sleighton. "He'll not be here."

"Is he ill?" asked the teller.

"No, he just wouldn't come. That's all."

"Tell him I'm awfully disappointed," said Oren-Toole.

He was among the earliest to leave the party, and at once made his way back to the seminary. An open window made it possible for him to hear a tenor voice singing. "Then he didn't catch him," he muttered. With desperate caution he slipped inside the dormitory corridor, and with one comprehensive look along its length made sure that his man was not in hiding there.

The shock of that discovery covered him with a cold sweat. Well, there was nothing to do but find him. He realized that he could not inquire of the police without implicating himself.

"It's a still hunt," he said grimly. "Well, Prestonbury is not so large!"

Before morning, however, he found that it was large enough to have swallowed up completely the object of his search.

VI

A SON WHO HARDENED HIS HEART

IT was only a moment after Oren-Toole's old man had established himself in a dark corner of the corridor of Morton Hall that he saw the door of Room 35 open and its occupant emerge and walk briskly through the hall to another room, which he entered, closing the door.

"This," thought the watcher, "is my chance." Very cautiously, and alert for the sound of returning footsteps, he entered the vacant room. He was surprised at its scanty furniture. From the lighted lamp on the table he drew the conclusion that the occupant had not gone out for the entire evening, and so he hastened his movements. But hardly had he slipped the package into the table drawer when he heard steps returning along the corridor so rapidly that he knew he could not escape. His only chance was the little bedroom whose open door was behind him. Passing quickly inside, he crept under the bed to await developments. Presently he fell asleep.

Outside Horton worked briskly till ten o'clock. Laying aside his books at that hour he wrote a letter to his sister, addressed it and left it unsealed on the table. The time that must pass before Sleighton would return was not long, so he went back to his friend's room to sing at the little organ.

Not until the sound of the singing reached him did

the sleeper under the bed awake. Listening, he could hear no sound in the outer room, so he resolved to venture out. Had he straightway taken his departure, coming events would have been very different; but as he passed the table he noticed the superscription on the letter lying there, addressed in Bradford's bold, clear hand.

"What?" exclaimed the old man in surprise; "'Mrs. Conrad Vanderbosch!' That's Anna. Who's writing to her?"

Curiosity overcame caution. He took the letter, opened it, looked at the signature, and with another exclamation of surprise sat down to read. When he had finished the perusal he did not move.

"So here's where Bradford lives! Well, I've found the boy in a mighty odd way! I'm in luck. I've hidden the package. Probably that chap isn't waiting outside any more, but I can hunt him up to-morrow and tell him I worked it all right. I came to this town to find Bradford, and I'll stay right here till he comes in again. Won't he be surprised! It's a long time since I've seen Bradford."

The poor old fellow settled down into the Boston rocker, in the comfort of which he once more fell into a doze, the letter still in his relaxed fingers.

At eleven Sleighton returned. He burst like a boy into the room where Bradford was still singing. "Oh, Brad, it was great—simply great! You missed it; you certainly missed it!"

"Did I?"

"You surely did! Let me tell you. Miss Elmore——"

"Too late for your story to-night, A. S. I'm going to bed." He made for the door.

"Oh, no, you're not! You're going to listen. Sit down." He backed up against the door, blocking Horton's exit.

"Get out of my way, A. S. I tell you I'm going to bed."

"Of course, later on. So am I. Later on. But now you're going to hear about the party. It was the finest ever. Music, a spread, fine young people, Miss Elmore ——"

"Skip Miss Elmore, Sleighton. She was not the party."

"No! But the party belonged to her. Don't try to take your grumpiness out on me, boy. Miss Elmore and everybody were asking after you. Even that Irishman, O'Toole, said he was disappointed. And say, old man, there's a choral society in this town that gives 'The Messiah' every Christmas!"

"Well, don't I know it? I've been asked to be soloist at the next presentation."

"You have, and never told me?"

"I don't tell you every breath I draw, Sleighton. I was going to tell you, though, presently."

"You were? All right. Say! what's the matter with that O'Toole?"

"Nothing, as far as I know."

"Do you call him Oren-Toole, with a hyphen in your voice, like the rest of 'em?"

"Why?" As he spoke he took his seat on the organ stool, and Sleighton left his guard at the door.

"Because if you do his name is no more Oren-Toole than mine is."

"Oh, yes, I call him Oren-Toole. What difference does it make?"

"None, only that's not his name. He doesn't like

you. I heard him say twice that your solo Sunday morning was a cheap bid for the First Church choir, that you had bagged the game, and that old Jickers who had hired you couldn't tell the difference between picking a banjo and blowing a cornet. Miss Elmore overheard that, and she said to me so that O'Toole heard her, 'Please ask Mr. Horton if he will kindly sing that song in our church next Sunday.' You'll have to do it, Brad."

"All right."

"They say old man Elmore is worth a million. And this girl —— Why, Brad, Miss Elmore ——"

"Stop that, Austin," said Horton wearily. "I tell you I don't want to hear about her or any other girl. One beat me out of being a lawyer; another shall not beat me out of being a minister."

Sleighton paused a moment as if uncertain what to say next. Horton moved uneasily. "Hold on! be easy! What were we talking about, Brad? Oh, I know! 'Twas that Oren-Toole, and how he's down on you. He was pitching in about that Robin Adair song, too. So I told him the minister asked you to sing it. 'Did the minister ask him to wear that white carnation, too?' he sneered. Then young Jickers took it up. 'Oren-Toole,' said he, 'and gentlemen of the jury, I'm the carnation malefactor, and not the minister. I put that on his hymn-book, my little old founded-in-1827-self.' Then there was a roar, and Miss Elmore ——"

But Bradford's patience was exhausted. "Shut up!" he cried angrily. "I tell you I've heard enough about girls," and with a rush he was out of the room.

Then quick upon the sound of his hurrying feet Sleighton heard an excited call. "Austin, Austin

Sleighton, come here! There's a sneak thief in my room!"

Sleighton ran down the corridor to find Horton holding in a firm grasp an old man, who begged and pleaded to be released. "I'm not a thief. I've taken nothing, I haven't, Bradford. I haven't taken a thing."

Like avenging justice Horton towered above his poor old captive. "Hold him, A. S.," he cried, "while I search him." He gave a vicious shake to the cowering figure as he spoke.

"Oh, don't, Bradford! I'm too old. I haven't done anything."

Sleighton grasped the old man's arms, though not so roughly as Bradford had done, and held them while Horton searched his pockets. All he found was an old knife, some keys and a bundle of letters tied with a faded blue ribbon. "He's stolen nothing. Let go of him, Austin," said the searcher as he released his own grasp with a final shake.

"Don't shake me so, Bradford. Please don't shake me so." The trembling wail was pitiful to hear. "I've been looking for you—I've been looking for you."

"Looking for me? Did you expect to find me in that envelope?" His laugh was bitter and harsh. "What do you want here? Come! What do you want?"

"I want you, Bradford. I didn't know where I was until I saw your name. I didn't, Bradford."

"What are you calling me Bradford for? Who are you?"

Sleighton was looking in mute astonishment at the two men. He had never seen such an exhibition of passion as his friend was showing, and would have

interfered had he been able. As it was, he stood speechless while Horton jammed the old man down into the Boston rocker. "You can rest there a minute," he said curtly. "A. S., I found this old man here asleep, with my letter open in his hand. You watch him and I'll call the police."

"Oh, no, Bradford!" The old man started up greatly excited. "I'm not a thief. You said I hadn't taken anything. But you've got my letters. They're your mother's letters, Bradford. Give them to me. They're all I have now, Bradford."

A sudden gleam of light flashed on Austin Sleighton. There was a life story behind Bradford Horton that had not been told. Was this old man his father? Bradford was still towering over the shrinking figure. "Who are you?" he thundered. "What do you mean by talking about my mother?"

The answer came slowly: "I'm an old man, Bradford. I'm not strong, and I'm hungry. I've eaten nothing since noon. Why do I talk about your mother? Because I loved her, Bradford. You never knew her. She died when you were a little baby. Give me back my letters, Bradford."

Knowing what must come, angry to the centre of his soul, the young man's only answer was, "How did you know my name?"

"I saw it signed to the letter, Bradford."

"What do you know about my mother?"

"What do I know about her?" As he answered a fragment of dignity that must once have been his appeared in him. "She was my wife, a better wife than I deserved. I'm your father, Bradford. Don't you know me? I'm An ——"

His sentence was never finished. The young man

starting towards him in fury shouted, "Stop! Don't you dare go on." The threat in his voice was effective and a long silence followed. The old man sat in the Boston rocker; the incensed son faced him from beyond the table; Sleighton leaned against the door and watched them both. "Bad mess, this," he was thinking. "His father, eh? This beats the snow-bank."

At last with evident effort Bradford Horton spoke. "Father, what were you doing in my room?"

"I didn't know it was your room, Bradford. I came in here to do an errand for a man; he gave me my dinner to-day, and was good to me, and I wanted to pay him back. There was no harm in it. It was a surprise, you know, Bradford, a surprise."

"I should say it was—a complete surprise, too. Who was the man?"

"I don't know."

"What was the surprise?"

"I can't tell you, Bradford. The man told me to let no one know. You'll find out to-morrow."

"No, I won't. I'll find out to-night. You'll tell me what your precious surprise is or I'll have you in the police station in half an hour, father," and the bitterness in the last words made Sleighton shiver.

"Oh, no! Bradford, no! Don't send me to the station," begged the forlorn man. "Give me your mother's letters and I'll go." His voice broke as he remembered for what a different reception he had hoped.

But Bradford was untouched. "What is the surprise?" As he asked he returned the bundle of letters. "What is the surprise?"

"I don't know, Bradford. I hid it as the man told me to. You'll find it to-morrow. I've got to keep my promise to the man, Bradford."

"Promise? You keep a promise? Bring out your surprise or I'll ——"

"It was a present, Bradford, from a lady, a young lady who didn't want you to know. The man said it was handkerchiefs."

"Where is it?"

The old man opened the table drawer and produced the package. "Here it is, Bradford." He laid it on the table.

Horton looked at his watch. "There's time," he said. "Will you take a short walk with me, Sleighton?"

"Yes; short or long," answered Sleighton gravely.

"Come, father! You've saved yourself from one station, but you've earned another. I'm going to give you a free ride."

"I don't know what you mean, Bradford. I don't want the package. It's yours."

"I'll give it to you, father. I've never given you anything before," the angry son answered, and thrust the package into the old man's pocket. "Come on now to the station."

"Oh, don't take me away, Bradford. I came to Prestonbury to live with you. It won't be for very long. I'm a broken old man, Bradford."

Horton surveyed his father for a moment as if he were debating whether or not he should relent and face all that his father's presence there would mean. Then his face hardened, and with bitterness he answered, "No; you'll have to go. Come on."

The walk to the railway station was trying to Bradford Horton. The poor old wreck kept up his pleading. "I'm an old man, Bradford. I haven't any home. Let me stay, Bradford. Let me stay." But the son was inexorable. Shame at the situation in

which the old man's coming had placed him made him sore and angry to the centre of his being.

At the door of the sleeping car he handed the conductor a ticket to New York, purchased with money which he could ill afford to spare; paid also the Pullman fare and tipped the porter, with the request to see the passenger safely put down at the end of the run. To his father, just before he turned away, he gave a dollar, the last in his wallet.

"This will buy you a meal or two," he said, "if you don't spend it for drink." It was a most unfilial and unlovely parting word.

The old man answered only, "I don't drink now, Bradford. I've reformed."

VII

THE REVENGE OF CONSCIENCE

"TAKE that rocker, Sleighton. It's comfortable. I'll walk while I talk. No, no," as his friend demurred, "sit down. I'd rather walk." It was half-past twelve. The silence that had followed the departure of the midnight train had been almost unbroken as the two young men walked back to the seminary. Sleighton watched his friend's nervous pacing up and down the room.

"Bradford," he said quietly, "I wouldn't talk tonight. You're all upset. You'd better go to bed."

"No. We'll have it out. You've had a look into my closet, now I'll bring out the skeleton. I want you to know the bottom facts."

"Guess I do understand the bottom facts, Brad. I don't care for the details."

Bradford stopped walking. The confidence in Sleighton's tone came as a surprise. "You don't? After that scene?"

"That scene doesn't change my opinion of you. I'm your friend, you know."

Bradford grasped the hand held out. "You're one worth having, too," he said, his voice choked with emotion. "You mean you believe in me in spite of having seen what my father is?"

"I do."

"My father! Think of it!" He resumed his nervous pacing up and down the room. "But my mother wasn't that sort, Sleighton. She was beautiful and

gifted and had some property when she married him. He broke her heart—at least, I can remember his telling me so, long years ago, when I last saw him. I never knew her. She died when I was born. My father deserted me —— Oh, I've had no easy row to hoe, A. S.!"

"Don't tell me about it—it upsets you, Bradford."

"Guess you're right. Oh, A. S., now I've made a place for myself in the world, and am started to be a man, why did he have to turn up here? I couldn't keep him. How can I record myself as the son of a drunken vagabond? But I'll never be the same to you, now you know."

"Just the same, my boy. I'm Scotch-Irish, you know. We never go back on our friends. You were adopted, I suppose?"

"Yes. Horton was my adopted father's name. I never knew till I was thirteen that he wasn't my own father. Oh, it's no use, Sleighton—I must talk this out. Let me tell you the whole wretched story."

The narrative that followed was not a short one. From it Sleighton learned in detail the facts about his friend's early life and the reasons that made it impossible, as it seemed to him, for him to acknowledge his real parentage, particularly in Prestonbury. "People have got to take me for what I'm worth in myself," he ended. "I've got to win on my own merits."

"You'll win, all right," said Sleighton with confidence. "I'll stand by you. I can't blame you for feeling as you do about your father; but, Bradford, I wish you had kept him till morning."

"I couldn't," said Bradford miserably. "Oh, Sleighton, I didn't know he was even living! It's too much! What sent him here?"

"God," was Sleighton's solemn answer.

* * * * * *

The messenger of the Preston Plow Company noticed that the package given him by Oren-Toole at the bank next morning was sealed with three big red seals. He spoke of it as he took it. "It's the only safe way," the teller answered.

The messenger repeated the words to the cashier of the plow company as he broke the seals. "Great Scott!" exclaimed the cashier. "Safe way! Martin, have you had this open?"

"No, sir."

"Pick up those scraps and come with me to the bank."

Oren-Toole, shaking inwardly, saw the messenger returning with his chief. He braced himself for the part he must play, but his easy manner hardly concealed the traces of his sleepless, anxious night.

"Mr. Teller," said the plow company official, "did you give this man a package for us this morning?"

"I did, sealed with three seals."

"Is this it?" And upon Oren-Toole's assent, he added, "Open it, will you?"

Oren-Toole opened the package with perfect calmness. "What's this?" he asked with a look of great astonishment as he saw the contents; "what's your joke?"

"It's no joke. That package came to me with three unbroken seals. You see what was in it when I opened it."

Oren-Toole called Mr. Maxwell, and to him the facts of the case were rehearsed. He directed Oren-Toole to replace the money at once, asking the cashier to say nothing of the matter to any one, and at once sent a summons to the directors of the bank to meet at one

o'clock. At that meeting Oren-Toole again told the story of how he had put up the money the day before, and that morning given it to the messenger. To the majority of his hearers the whole thing seemed a mystery. But Ansley Jickers, who with his father and brother was among the directors, spoke up promptly in response to the president's request for opinions.

"If you please," he said, turning to Oren-Toole, "I should like to ask the teller some questions. Mr. Oren-Toole, who was the old man talking with you by the bank door yesterday?"

"I don't know," answered the teller, outwardly cool but within both astonished and frightened. "He was an old tramp who asked me for a dime as I went out at noon for dinner. He looked hungry and poor, and I took him to Sylvester's."

"You are sure you do not know who he was?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was he in the bank at all?"

"Not that I am aware."

"Have you seen him since you gave him his dinner?"

"I saw him twice. I left the bank for a few minutes about three o'clock, and he stood by the door. On my way to the musicale last night I saw him again on the street going towards the seminary."

"Was Mr. Horton in the bank when you counted this cash?"

"Yes."

"Whereabout in the bank does Mr. Horton work?"

"Next desk to me."

"Did he see you count this money?"

"I think he knew I was counting and putting money into a package."

"Did Mr. Horton see this old man with you?"

"I think not."

"Did any one?"

"It seems you did."

"You say you went out in the afternoon. About what time?"

"Three o'clock."

"Was any one left in the bank with Mr. Horton?"

"No. The other clerks had gone."

"How long were you gone from the bank?"

"A half hour."

"Could Mr. Horton have taken this money and put the dummy pieces in its place while you were gone?"

"Yes."

"Did you put into the safe the package which the plow company has returned?"

"I put a package into the safe, and as the safe bears no mark of having been opened, I suppose it was the same that I delivered to the messenger."

"That is all," said Ansley. "Mr. President, I think we can give the teller leave to retire."

When Oren-Toole had gone, the lawyer continued:

"Gentlemen, there has been no robbery of the safe. It could only be opened by an expert, and he would have left his marks. A thief would have taken all the money in the safe, and have left no dummy. The original package never went into the safe. This robbery is somewhere between the teller, Mr. Horton and the old man."

"Who do you think took it, squire?" asked a director.

"I do not think—I know."

"Who was it? How do you know?"

"I am not on the stand, gentlemen," said the lawyer.

"Have the directors anything to propose?" asked the president.

"Yes!" Two or three spoke at once. "Issue a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Horton and have his room searched."

"Gentlemen," spoke up the druggist, "issue a warrant for my arrest and search the drug store. You'll find just as much of that money there as in Mr. Horton's room. This talk's all rubbish, as far as that student's concerned. The money is gone. Now keep still; lay low. Two thousand dollars can't go flying off without leaving some clew. There's a bungler at the bottom of this, but his name isn't Bradford Horton."

Nevertheless the arrest and search were ordered. Mr. Elmore, Mr. Maxwell, Oren-Toole and the Jickers brothers were in the office of the police magistrate when the officer arrived with Horton. The formal charge of having robbed the bank was preferred by the president and treasurer. Ansley Jickers announced himself as counsel for the prisoner, and asked permission to see him alone before the hearing. The officer reported a careful search of the student's room, and no money to be found nor any trace of any.

Oren-Toole told his story, making no charges and giving no hint that he suspected any one. Horton, to whom the arrest had come as a bolt from the blue, stated his case, the old man figuring largely in the narrative. His closing was suggestive:

"I put a package," he said, "about the size of this dummy into the inside pocket of the old man's coat. I think it must have contained the missing money. I believe the person who the old man said gave him the package, if he can be identified, is the man who took the money."

The face of Oren-Toole flushed and then went white, which Ansley Jickers noticed. "I knew," he said to himself. "I knew that I knew." Aloud he addressed the magistrate. "Your honour, I wish to ask Mr. Oren-Toole some questions based on what he has already said to the directors of the bank. I wish to know if he usually counts out and puts up money the day before it is wanted?"

"No, I do not," answered the teller.

"How came you to do it in this case?"

"The plow company had sent up a memorandum of the particular denominations of bills they wanted, and I was making sure we had them."

"At what time of day did you put up this money?"

"Between one and three o'clock."

"That was after you had seen the old man?"

Oren-Toole assented.

"How was it that you and Mr. Horton were alone in the bank that afternoon?"

"Two of the clerks had gone out by special permission to see the ball game."

"You went out at three o'clock also, leaving Mr. Horton alone?"

"Yes."

"Had you put the money in the safe before going?"

"No."

"Mr. Horton could have stolen that money and gone, or made the dummy package and gone, before your return, could he not?"

The answer was in the affirmative.

"Did you not think of this as possible?"

"That is an improper question, Mr. Jickers," interrupted the magistrate. "The inquiry will stop here. Mr. Horton is held in two hundred dollars bail. In de-

fault of that we shall have to entertain you over Sunday, Mr. Horton. Court will resume this inquiry on Monday morning at ten o'clock."

Mr. Elmore promptly furnished the bail and the group of seminary students, who had been present at the hearing, escorted Bradford back to his room. Not a man of them believed him guilty.

* * * * * *

An hour after the hearing Oren-Toole and Maxwell were closeted with Mr. Elmore in the latter's private office at the bank. The president did not wish to think that Horton had taken the money, and was certain Oren-Toole had not. On the whole, Horton's story seemed less credible than the teller's. He remembered hearing Eleanor say at breakfast that she had given her party just to have Mr. Horton sing at it, and how he had sent regrets. "Why did he send regrets?" the president asked himself, recalling the circumstance. He turned in perplexity to the teller.

"Oren-Toole, you said you saw that old man going towards the seminary last night. Do you think he was going there?"

"I do now, sir."

"Have you any theory about this—this robbery?"

"Yes. I think the old man had the money on his person then. I think he was going to Mr. Horton's room." The teller had lost all his nervousness and was playing his game with skill now.

"But how could the old man get the money? Who gave it to him?"

"Why, Mr. Horton gave it to him. Gave it during the half hour that I was out of the bank. They are accomplices."

There was a long silence. Both men feared the teller

was right; both hoped he was wrong. Both felt the attraction of Horton's personality and longed to believe him what he seemed. But Oren-Toole's manner carried conviction with it.

"Sam, what's to be done?" the president asked at last.

"I don't know," said Maxwell slowly. He had been evolving a scheme in his mind that would be practical, perhaps, if they were sure of Oren-Toole's trustworthiness. "I don't know, unless we send some one to New York and hunt up the porter who carried the old man. If he verifies Horton's story, then we could put the police on track."

"Then you think as I do, that the old man's got the money?"

"Looks that way." Maxwell remembered Ansley's questions at the hearing, which had aroused doubts in his mind; but he quieted the doubts with the assurance that lawyers were always suspicious. "And Oren-Toole's the only one of us that could identify the old fellow."

"Send him on this detective excursion then," said Mr. Elmore promptly. His confidence in the teller was unshaken, and went far towards bolstering up Maxwell's faith. So the matter was decided; and as no time was to be lost, Oren-Toole was to take the Sunday night train, which would carry the same shift of men as Friday's.

Bradford Horton, in the meantime, returning from dinner, had found on his table a small vase holding a single white carnation. "Miss Jickers again," he said, smiling. But that was his last happy moment that afternoon. The events of the preceding night and the morning just past were fresh in his mind, and his conscience was in active rebellion against the part he had

played with his father. His Greek Testament had lost its usual charm; an attempt to study Hebrew brought no better result. Before him on the page stood the abject figure of a pleading old man. Conscience had led him to her judgment bar.

"You are not happy," began the self-arraignment. "What is the trouble?"

"Yes, I am happy—happy enough. There's no trouble." The reply was dogged.

"You were in an uncomfortable position this morning," the debate went on within him in spite of himself. "It is not wise for a student for the ministry to be charged with crime."

"I did not put myself there. How was I to blame? Come—how was I to blame?" The reply was sullen.

"What will you do Monday morning? Suppose you're held for trial. Then you'll be a party to a fine scandal."

"I won't be held. My story will free me Monday morning." The reply was like bravado.

"You would have had no story to tell this morning had you not acted like a brute to your father. His presence and the package would have freed you and fixed the guilt where it belongs, and you would not be unhappy as you are."

"Father? Don't talk to me about my father. Henry Horton was my father." The reply was angry.

"Was he? I think not," came the answer of the self who knew the truth. "It was your father to whom you were so brutal."

"Brutal, was I? Well, what's he ever done for me? He's a vagabond." The reply was aggressive.

"No doubt—no doubt. But he's your father."

"Hang it all, I'll not badger myself to death for a

wretch who broke my mother's heart." There was a show of virtue in the reply. It ended the inquisition for the moment, and though still restless and perturbed the young man took up the Testament in English. "There'll be comfort here," he thought.

The book fell open at the eighth of Romans. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

He dropped the book and jumped from his chair as if he had been struck from behind. He had heard a voice sound through his soul, "How much is a man in Christ Jesus who turns his father out-of-doors?"

In pleading tone, aloud, he said, "What else could I do? I had no bed for him. I had no money for him. What could I do with him?"

Then conscience made the fiercest attack of all. "You could have found a place for your father. The money that bought the ticket to New York would have kept him over night at least. Pride was your trouble, Bradford Horton; pride and shame. You were ashamed to have Sleighton see that unlovely father. You did not wish Mr. Elmore to know that, though your lie was unintentional, you had lied to him about Henry Horton. You did not wish the Jickers people—Miss Lucy, yes, and for that matter Miss Elmore ——"

Then, angry to his heart's core, and angry only at himself, he burst out bitterly, "I'll have no more of this. I know why I did what I did, and I'll do what I choose to do without your ——"

"No, you will not, Bradford Horton. You're a coward, an arrant coward. Look at yourself. You turned that old man adrift not because he was so utterly disreputable but because he was your father. Fine minister you'll make. Is this part of your 'sum of

direction'? Suppose he comes back some time by daylight? Then what will you do?"

Then Bradford Horton seized his hat and started as if pursued. Street after street he traversed, coming at last to the baseball park, where a game was in progress. He entered the park; but the game was dull. The vision of his father begging for his letters and crying, "I've been looking for you, Bradford," would not leave him.

Joe Jickers spied him in the crowd, and they walked back to town together. Sleighton was at supper when he reached the boarding-house, and the first words of his friend only intensified the misery of the afternoon. "You ought to have kept your father, Bradford. He would have bottled up that Oren-Toole."

Bradford made no reply, but sat moodily through the meal. A thought of the white carnation in the vase on his table crossed his mind. "I'll go thank Miss Jickers for this last kindness," he thought.

The old doctor met him at the door. "Lucy's not at home," he announced. "But come in, anyway. I'm not a girl, and I'm not as young as I was, but I'm glad to see you. Henry Horton's son will always be welcome in my house."

He led the way to the library. "So they accused you of robbery? No son of Henry Horton could ever be guilty of robbery."

"There! There!" said watchful conscience. "There's your chance to get straight with one man. Tell him the truth." But Bradford did not obey. He sat silent, thinking what to say, and before his reply was ready Dr. Jickers was filling the pause.

"Bless my soul! How clearly I can see Henry Horton! He left the old town where we were boys to-

gether when he was about eighteen. He went to Glencoe into the cotton factory. A born business man, was Henry. How old were you when he died?"

"Thirteen, sir."

"Pretty young. Do you remember him?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"Well, it's a great thing to have a good inheritance —he was a fine man. I remember ——" and the old doctor rambled on with stories of Henry Horton's boyhood, while Bradford grew more and more uncomfortable, until it was time for the young man to go to choir rehearsal, and he departed, the truth still untold.

Sleighton was in his room at his little organ when his friend came in from rehearsal. Sleighton was cheerful, Horton wholly depressed.

"I wonder where he is," was his first utterance.

"Who? Where who is?" Sleighton kept on playing.

"My father."

"Oh! So there's where you are. I don't wonder you're glum."

"Yes, there's where I am. I've been there all day. Where is he?"

"I knew you'd ask that." The tone was not comforting.

"How did you know?"

"Oh, I'm getting acquainted with you. You have too much conscience to be brutal and stay so, long."

"Brutal? Do you think I was brutal last night?"

"Yes—don't you? The old man was your father."

The answer was more than the overwrought man could bear. On his feet in an instant, and intensely angry, he fairly hissed at Sleighton: "You against me, too? I did not expect that of you, Austin Sleighton." The door slammed and he was gone.

Sleighton was too wise to follow. "He'll have to fight this out alone," was the organist's only comment.

And the fight was hard. The storm broke almost before he had closed his door behind him.

"I know what hell is!" he cried. "I know what hell is! God! Is there a God, then? Is this the way God calls me to the ministry? What sort of a God are you? I come here to try honestly to be a man. You send this old reprobate to bring me into disgrace. I try to rise to respectability; you hang this drag upon my soul. Tell them? Go tell Elmore and Jickers that I am a liar? Then what? Oh, my God, why are you so hard, so hard, so hard?"

For an hour these winds of passion swept his soul. At last down on his knees he fell. "Oh, my God, my God!" was his last bitter cry; then all was still.

When Sleighton entered half an hour later, overcome by anxiety as to his friend's condition, he found Bradford bowed before the old chair. He gave no sign that he heard, and was still as if dead. Sleighton watched the motionless man for a moment and then laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Brad, old boy," he asked gently, "are you sick? Are you asleep?"

Slowly Horton raised his head. "No, not sick," he answered. "But I have almost cursed God, Austin. I am glad you have come. I have had an awful battle, but I've conquered. I'm sorry I was angry at you—very sorry. God has forgiven me—now you will, won't you?"

"Yes, Brad, I will," said Austin Sleighton slowly.

On Monday morning no one appeared against Bradford Horton, and the magistrate dismissed the case.

VIII

SURPRISED IN CASH

"MEAN? He's the meanest cuss in two worlds! Great God! How he shook me!" The poor old derelict in the Pullman berth had not slept in the hours that had passed since he boarded the train at midnight. Gradually his bitter disappointment at the reception he had met changed to an equally bitter resentment of his son's treatment, until dawn found him in a raging passion, whose only vent was in maledictions and curses.

"When I get to New York I'll make my will," he muttered laughing. "I'll leave him all I have." Then, with a quick change of thought, "No, no, I won't! He shan't have his mother's letters. I'll have them buried with me. Poor Laura!"

Daylight was coming in at the window of his berth, and still he lay thinking.

"What was that surprise? Wonder what girl would send Bradford a surprise? Ten dollars for it, too! Something queer about that!" He reached for his coat.

"Bradford didn't want his surprise, so I'll surprise myself with it," he said as he drew out the package. Raising himself, he read for the first time the superscription: "Mr. Bradford Horton, Prestonbury Theological Seminary." He scanned the writing. "No girl ever wrote that. That's a man's hand."

In a moment the parcel was open. "Good Lord!"

he ejaculated as he stared at the contents. "Surprise? I should say so. Biggest surprise I've had in years." He counted the bills, then began to laugh. "I guess I can forgive Bradford now. But that red-headed man ——"

His mind began busily to work out a theory; he was not too entirely broken for clear thought. "Bradford didn't know a thing about this," he concluded. "That red-headed man did. He's a bank clerk; this is bank money. But why did he want me to hide it in Bradford's room? What's the game? I guess I've saved Bradford from a striped suit, and it won't hurt me, either. No one will ever find it on me." The old man chuckled with real joy.

Suddenly the curtains of his berth were parted. "Albany!" said the porter in his ear. "Breakfast hyah!" Then, at the sight of the money spread out before him, "Oh, Lawd, boss!" he exclaimed, "wha'd ye get dat? Wha' ye gwine do wid dat?"

But without waiting for an answer to his question the amazed porter vanished, and his place was taken in a moment by two conductors.

"What are you doing with so much money spread out on your bed?" one asked suspiciously.

"Counting it, to see if I'd lost any in the night."

"Aren't you the man a young fellow put on the train at Prestonbury?"

"Same one."

"Who was he?"

"My son."

"You and he don't look much alike."

"Well, what of it?"

The conductors conferred together, but spoke so loudly that Anson overheard. One said: "The old

fellow and the young one are probably a pair of crooks. This money is loot from somewhere. Let him alone now. Wire New York to have an officer at the train."

"Let 'em wire," said the old man as they disappeared. "There'll no officer find me."

When the train pulled away from Albany one lower berth was empty.

The old man was familiar with Albany. The Albemarle was not far away, and he registered there as "Bradford Horton, New York," by way of diverting from himself any possible search for the money. When he asked for a room, however, the clerk, surveying him askance, replied, "Sorry, Mr. Horton, but we can't accommodate you."

"That's all right, my boy, that's all right. But I've got a room here waiting. You see I keep the key always with me."

"Key? You've no key to any room here."

"Oh, yes, I have! Got a key to every hotel in this town." He pulled the package from his pocket, took out a hundred dollar bill and laid it on the desk. "What's that but a key? Show me up."

The clerk's manner changed instantly. "Well, all right, Mr. Horton. I see you've got a key. Front!" And very deferentially he was committed to the direction of a spruce bell-boy.

In the mirror of his room the new occupant surveyed himself. "I'm not handsome, not one bit. I don't blame the boy for thinking I was a hobo. How he'll stare when I go down."

He ordered a haberdasher and barber. Going down to a late breakfast, some time after, he saw that he had been right about the effect on the clerk of his transformation. He spent an hour at the table, aston-

ishing the waiters by his appetite, smoked a cigar, took the precaution of depositing his money in the hotel safe and ordered a carriage for a drive about the city he had once known well. Dismissing the equipage after he tired of it, he began to walk through the more familiar streets, passing finally down Capitol Hill and through Washington Street. A wave of sentiment swept over him.

"Laura lived here," he said. "Poor Laura! I wish she could see me, now that I've reformed. How glad she would be! I told Bradford, but he didn't believe me. Bradford didn't know how generous he was. Two thousand dollars! Good Lord! Why, I can make a fortune with two thousand dollars!"

Thus thinking and talking to himself, the old man came to a corner where stood a brilliant saloon, and where the fumes of the drinkables were on the air. Involuntarily he paused, sniffed, looked at the door. That look was the end of his good resolutions. He went into the saloon.

That day's drunkenness was destined to be his last earthly debauch. He was arrested before night, too drunk to realize where he was or what he had done. He had taken with him, when he went out, two hundred dollars from the package. It was gone; his new clothes were soiled and torn. The smashing of a plate-glass window, through which he had hurled a paving stone in anger at his ejection from a saloon, had caused his arrest. Arraigned on Monday morning he begged piteously for release, but without avail. He was consigned to the workhouse for three months.

Oren-Toole, in accordance with Mr. Elmore's plan, started for New York on Sunday night. The trip was in no way to his liking. If he should succeed in finding

the old man and the package, Horton's story would be verified. Then what? On the other hand, if matters could only remain as they were, with no investigation, he would be able by degrees to spread the story that Horton took the money, gave it to the old man and sent him away with it to a safe shelter.

He knew some would believe such a theory at first hearing, and that the number would increase until eventually Horton would be utterly discredited in Prestonbury. The trip he was making, however, would probably not allow matters to remain as they were, but there was no alternative. He must not only go, but must have some sort of report to make on his return.

On the train he learned from the porter the story of an old man with a lot of money, bound for New York, who disappeared at Albany. This information materially changed Oren-Toole's plan of action. He stopped at the capital. "If I find the old duffer and the money," he said, "I'll get it, and make him tell me that Horton gave it to him and started him for New York, but that he left the train at Albany, so as to dodge Horton and keep the money himself."

The scheme was becoming somewhat complicated, Oren-Toole felt, but his position was intricate and he must figure some way out.

"Then," he went on planning, "I'll take the money home and charge the theft on Nancy boy." That he could use the old man for his tool in any way he liked seemed a certainty. "If I don't find the money, I'll report that I couldn't find the old man. Either way will ruin Dudie in the long run."

The new plan worked well. Going for breakfast to the Albemarle and casually running his eye over the

register as a beginning of his search, he found the entry, "Bradford Horton, New York." Turning to the clerk he asked that his card might be taken to Mr. Horton.

"Mr. Horton's not here," was the reply.

"Not here? Where is he?"

"Sorry, sir, but we can't tell you."

"When will he be in?"

"Can't say as to that, either."

"Do you know anything at all about him?"

"Not a thing."

"He was here, of course?"

"Yes."

"Did he have any money?"

"Sure! We don't give free beds here."

"Did he have much?"

If Oren-Toole was incautious in his question, the clerk was not so in his answer. "How would I know whether he had much or little? He paid his bill in advance; that's all I cared about."

"Perhaps you think I'm meddling with what is none of my business, but I'm not. The truth is, a robbery was committed in Prestonbury last Friday night and suspicion has fastened upon this Mr. Horton."

"He didn't look like a robber. He was a rather shabbily dressed, inoffensive looking old man when he came in. He bought a new suit before he went out."

"You say he paid his bill. Was it with big bills or small ones?"

"Paid with a hundred dollar bill. We changed it for him."

"And he didn't say where he was going?"

With patience at last worn out, the clerk gave a surly, "Say, who are you, anyway—the father or mother of this old man?"

"You go to h——" answered Oren-Toole. "I've learned all I want to know."

But he had not; he wanted to find the old man. Satisfied that he had been at the Albemarle and had the money, he more than ever wanted to recover the money and the man. His search lasted all day, but was without results, and he took an evening train for home, determined to report his search fruitless.

On the train he bought an evening paper, and among its police items found one that interested him. An old man had been arraigned that morning and sent to the workhouse for smashing the costly plate-glass front of a saloon. He had pleaded for release on the ground that he would pay all the damages, as he had money in the safe at the Albemarle. The judge had ridiculed the story and sent him up. His name, the paper stated, was Andrew Drum.

Oren-Toole smiled as he read. "Bradford Horton, alias Andrew Drum," he said.

"Well, I know where the old man is and where the money is now, and I know what to do. I'll tie Nancy boy up into a little bundle before I get through."

IX

ANOTHER SONG AND A FRESH CARNATION

"HOW any one who can be as nice as you, Horton, can be so stubborn, I don't understand."

"Well, Austin, don't try. You'll have an easier time." Horton's refusal to join the Prestonbury Shakespeare Club was the occasion of these remarks. The refusal had been impolitic, beyond question. The club was a notable affair, composed of the most cultured people of the city, and a few seminary students were year by year invited to join it. Sleighton and Horton had just received such an invitation, and Sleighton had accepted at once.

Bradford's courteous letter declining the honour was disappointing to the club. It was the first intimation received by society in general of his entire lack of interest in what it might offer, but it was followed during the autumn by other refusals of other invitations. "Too bad," said the ladies, "that one who can sing so wonderfully and who is so handsome should be such a bear," and with that they dropped him.

Little he cared. With steady consistency he held to his course, giving himself with all the ardour of his strong nature to study and to his music. He committed to memory the whole of "The Messiah" in preparation for the Christmas presentation of the great oratorio, but steadily refused to attend the frequent rehearsals. He saved money, too, and just before the end of the fall term made a call upon Mr. Elmore.

"I would like to pay my promissory note for fifty dollars, Mr. Elmore," he said.

The president was greatly surprised. Such a thing had not happened before in forty years. For just a moment the question was in the president's mind, "I wonder if this is part of that stolen money." Then he was ashamed that such a thought could occur to him.

"There!" thought the young man as he went down the steps of the great house on Sunset Hill, "I'm free! If ever I have to meet Miss Elmore now, I can look her in the face without being ashamed."

At the bank next day Mr. Elmore talked the matter over with his cashier. "Sam, that's a remarkable young man," he began. "The dean was up a few nights ago. He said the old Greek professor was astonished at his knowledge of the Greek Testament. I'm inclined to think he'll be our next incumbent of the chair the old man now occupies, and it may be as soon as he graduates. He's brilliant, yes, fascinating. Why, when he paid me that money last night he made me feel like apologizing for ever having lent it to him. There's a great future for him."

The evening mail of the same day brought Mr. Elmore a letter postmarked "Glencoe." It would be hard to describe his emotions as he held it. If not exactly a voice from the dead, it certainly came from a far distant past. But his emotions before opening it were as nothing to those which swept his soul when, having read it, he laid it down. "The wretch!" he said, after a moment's silence. "I think he stole that money." The letter ran:

"SIR:

"I cannot understand why you have written to me. Your present assurance surpasses your past faith-

lessness. Bradford Horton, of whom you write, is no son of mine. He was found on my porch when a baby. I would have sent him to the county house, but my husband kept him. He grew up in my house, has been disobedient and ungrateful, and I will have nothing to do with him. You may do as you please.

"ROSALIE HORTON."

For two days a storm raged in this man's heart. Rosalie Horton had stung him to the quick in his most vulnerable point—his pride. Over and over he repeated the words, "Your present assurance surpasses your past faithlessness," and the oftener he thought of them the fiercer burned the fire of his wrath. He had laid himself open to this, he remembered, for the sake of a man who was proved an impostor.

At last he became more calm. Rosalie he could forget, but the man who had lied to him and caused his discomfiture he would be compelled to see often. His feeling of fascination with Bradford Horton turned now towards hate, and more than once he said, "Rascal! He stole that money."

The day after the receipt of the letter he called Oren-Toole into his office at the bank. "I may as well confess to you," he began, "that I have steadily thought that you took the money which the bank lost in September, not to steal it, but for some reason to have it found in Horton's possession. Now I know I have been wrong. I have information that makes me know him thoroughly unworthy of belief about anything. He undoubtedly took the money while you were out of the bank and gave it to the old man, who was his accomplice. The old man had the money when he left here, or part of it. You may be able to find it when he comes out of the jail. In no other way

can it ever be proved. But proved or not, I wholly exonerate you."

Oren-Toole thanked Mr. Elmore for his confidence, made no other reply, and went back to his duties in the counting room. But, strangely enough, he felt more uncomfortable over the affair than ever before.

* * * * * *

The day for the annual presentation of "The Messiah" was approaching rapidly. Horton had not attended one rehearsal. Whenever the subject was broached he made plausible excuses, but at last Sleighton was instructed to tell him he must come. "You'll have to go, Brad," he added as he delivered the message. "The society is quite inclined to be indignant at you."

"Is it? Why at me and not at Morosini?"

"Morosini? Are you crazy, man? Morosini is an artist and non-resident."

"An artist, eh? Well, what am I? Come, Austin Sleighton, what am I?"

Sleighton looked at him for a moment in utter astonishment; the cool self-conceit of that questioning reply was too much for him. "Brad, you're my friend," he said slowly. "If you weren't, I should call you a conceited jackass."

But Horton had his way. He did not attend a rehearsal.

On the oratorio night in Christmas week a brilliant audience filled every seat in the concert hall. It was the event of the holiday season. As the curtain rose, Horton's eyes swept over the audience and caught the expectant smile of Lucy Jickers, the only girl in the city to whom he had shown the least attention. Alice Lee was in Joe's escort. The Maxwells were near, but

there was no Elmore to be seen. He did not think to look at the balcony boxes. Indeed, he hardly thought at all. His surroundings seemed to him like a dream, and he heard the orchestra as if it were in another world. He knew when it was leading up to his first recitative, but that was all.

Presently he felt that some one had risen and was standing alone. It was himself. He heard the sound of a voice ringing out the words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," and realized it was his own. Then came oblivion to all surroundings. What made the sudden silence? It brought him back to himself, and a soul-fear was on him like an obsession. Had he failed? Then, with equal suddenness, the pent-up emotion of the audience burst forth and swept through the hall, wave after wave of applause, like waves that beat against a headland. The singer rose, bowed, resumed his seat. Morosini offered his hand. "Congratulations, monsieur," he said, and at that act new applause rang through the hall. But Horton sat impassive through it all. He had scored; he would not risk an encore.

Bradford Horton had achieved his little triumph, but the climax of that night had not yet come. That was reached with the great aria in the second part. Many in the audience knew every movement of the song, but no ear in Prestonbury had ever heard it sung like the cry of a penitent soul pleading with God. It awed and hushed the throng, and the strains of the orchestra became almost inaudible. On and on the singer went to the end. Then dead silence; even the orchestra was still.

Horton stood like one unconscious of time or place or self, until he saw a single flower fall at his feet, flung

by a girl's hand from a box above. Taking it from the floor and looking upward to acknowledge the compliment, he saw Miss Elmore. The flower was a white carnation. "So it was not Lucy Jickers," he thought, as he placed it in his buttonhole. With a word to the leader of the orchestra and a sign to Sleighton at the piano, he began the old song, "If with All Your Hearts."

As the last note died he looked up, and as on that first September afternoon their eyes met. Those "wells of fire," as he had called them once, kindled a conflagration in his soul that he knew would not be extinguished until death.

Richard Elmore saw his look, and understood, and his heart was hot against the man who had deceived him, caused him humiliation, robbed him, and who now was using his power to fascinate his daughter. What? An upstart, who could not even tell the truth about himself, dare to lift his eyes in a public assembly to his Eleanor?

The Elmore carriage was very silent on the homeward drive. The father was planning the course to take with his daughter. The mother knew her husband's mood, and held her peace. The girl was living over the evening, with its heart-stirring enjoyment.

"Eleanor," said her father as they stepped into the hall, "I want to see you a moment."

"All right, father." They stepped into his office.

"Eleanor," he began, "you were exceedingly indiscreet to-night."

"Was I?" she said surprised. "How?"

"The whole house saw you throw that white carnation, Eleanor."

"Of course. They couldn't help it. What was indiscreet about that?"

"Can you not see? Had you thrown single flowers to each soloist it would have been right enough. But you singled out one, and that one a man."

"Sure, daddy. He was the only one singing and the only one worth it. I couldn't throw four flowers to four singers when there was only one."

"Eleanor," said her father gravely, "we must not quarrel. I fear we will if you evade. You meant that flower as a particular mark of favour to that particular singer, and I saw the look he gave you. I know a little about hearts, dear child. Let the folly end here. Take with you from this room no sentiment regarding the man who calls himself Bradford Horton."

"Calls himself?" The girl caught the insinuation in her father's emphasis. "Do you not call him so?"

"Yes, I suppose I shall call him so, if I have occasion to speak to him, but that is not his name."

"What is his name?"

"I do not know; no one does. He does not know himself."

"What makes you say that?"

For answer he turned to his desk. "Read that, Eleanor," he said, as he handed her Rosalie Horton's letter.

She read it without comment. Displeased at her continued silence he resumed, "Well, daughter?"

"Well, father?" was her reply.

"What do you think about that letter?"

"I think the writer is less than a woman." There was deep scorn in the low, cold, deliberate answer.

"How less than a woman? What is less than a woman?"

"A homicide," she said.

"That is intemperate language, Eleanor."

"No, father. It is sober, calm, judicial. Why did she not kill the baby that she never loved? Why does she wait until he is a man among strangers? She cannot kill him now, so she damns him. Who is she?"

The father did not fancy the mood his daughter was displaying. He was being drawn further into the matter than he had meant to go. His answer was pitifully weak.

"She is the writer of that letter, Eleanor."

"You knew her once, did you, father?"

"Yes, yes! I knew her once."

"When did you know her?"

"When I was in college."

"Oh, was it a college love affair?"

The girl had turned the table on him. He was thoroughly uncomfortable.

"Why, yes, dear. You might say it was."

"Were you and she engaged?"

"Yes, I suppose we were."

"And she broke it?"

"No, she did not. I did not. It—well, it—it lapsed."

"Is that what she means by faithlessness, father?"

"I suppose it is."

"Well, I am glad she was not my mother. Do you know what she thinks? I do. She hates you, and has for years. You wrote to her about Mr. Horton, and this reply of hers is not aimed at him but at you. She means to stab you in your tenderest spot—your sense of honour. She wanted to make you feel you'd been taken in. She's a coward, and no woman."

The father was glad to end the interview. "Good night, dear. We will let the past go, but for the future

remember you are to have nothing to do with this man."

"Why, daddy, I never have had anything to do with him. He would not come to my party. The girls say he shuns society. He makes no calls. Don't be unfair because I threw him a flower. Don't be unfair because of that woman from whom you happily escaped. There's some mistake or mystery about this. She has not told it all. Good-night, father." She kissed him and was gone.

By themselves, the father and mother talked for an hour, but got no farther than Mrs. Elmore's first remark, which was also her last: "I told you, Richard, when you wrote to that Rosalie that she would be furious."

By post the next day there came to Eleanor Elmore a letter in an unfamiliar hand. Its contents were brief.

"DEAR MISS ELMORE:

"I have not known until to-night to whom I was indebted for the white carnation that was on my hymn-book at Second Church last September, nor to whom to feel grateful for the sympathy manifested by the same token at the time of my arrest. The white carnation of to-night has established the identity of the hitherto unknown giver. Please accept the sincere thanks of one who is and must remain a stranger.

"Yours sincerely,

"BRADFORD HORTON."

X

THE SNARE SET AGAIN

"BERNARD!"

"Yes, sir."

At the call Oren-Toole entered the office of the president, elated and with elastic step. Never before had Mr. Elmore called him by his Christian name. "I've been thinking it's nearly time for that old man to be released from the jail. What did you say was his name?"

"Drum—Andrew Drum. The hundred days will be up on Wednesday, sir."

"Go to Albany to-morrow. When he is released, if he proves to be your old man, bring him here. I shall go to the bottom of this money story. If Horton stole it and gave it to the old man to take away I'll send them both to state's prison," Mr. Elmore concluded grimly.

The bank teller had an unhappy day. To bring that old man back to Prestonbury and have him tell the truth, as he probably must if Mr. Elmore questioned him, was the thing farthest possible from his intentions. But he could not escape the trip to Albany, and how to lie his way out of the entanglement did not at once appear.

"I'll go to Albany to-morrow. Well! Old Drum will come out Wednesday. If I can manage a way to stay away until Saturday night I can work it. While Horton is singing Sunday morning Drum and I can hide that money in Horton's room, and then I'll have Nancy

boy. Won't I? I guess! But how can I keep away until Saturday?"

So he worried all day long. Circumstances, however, were shaping to play Oren-Toole's game for him better than he could play it himself.

The Prestonbury papers next morning announced: "Our new student, Bradford Horton, the singer who so surprised and pleased every one by his work in 'The Messiah,' will appear in the same oratorio in Albany on Thursday night of this week."

Oren-Toole read that at breakfast, and could scarcely believe his eyes. Then he said, "That will be the unluckiest engagement you ever made, Nancy boy. I'll bottle you up now." His plan was formed in an instant.

He was at the jail next morning in good season and was told Andrew Drum would be discharged at ten o'clock. Not thinking it best to meet Drum in the presence of the officials, he went into the street, where he walked up and down near the gate.

Andrew Drum left the prison in high spirits. "I'll go to the Albemarle," he thought, "get my money and leave Albany on the first train. I'll ——" His thought was stopped abruptly by a hand on his shoulder.

"Hello, Horton! How are you? Didn't expect to have company waiting for you, eh?"

"No, I didn't. My name's not Horton, and I don't know you," was the reply.

"You don't? Well, what is your name?"

"Drum—Andrew Drum."

"Drum, eh? Drum's good. You beat me once, and I was no drum. Now, drum or bugle, I'll be blowed if I don't beat you. Where's that parcel I gave you?"

"I tell you I don't know you," insisted the other.

"Oh, yes, you do. I gave you a parcel to hide in a room in Prestonbury, and you didn't do it. I want that parcel."

The old man saw denial was useless and changed his tactics.

"Yes, I recollect now. You're the man with the surprise."

"Exactly. I want that parcel."

"Do you want to hide it in the man's room? Is the girl getting anxious?"

"Don't you be insolent, you old rip," Oren-Toole answered harshly. "Come here." He seized his captive roughly by the arm and led him to a cab. "Get in," he ordered. "Drive to the Albemarle," he called to the driver. "Now what's your name?"

"I told you Andrew Drum. I hid that parcel just as you said in that man's room."

"Stop your lying," said the teller. "Your name's not Drum. You registered at the Albemarle as Bradford Horton."

"Well, suppose I did," was the defiant answer. "What business is that of yours?"

"Business? You hadn't a cent the day I picked you up in Prestonbury. You had a big pile of money at the hotel, and left it there. That money was in my parcel, and I'm going to have it. You'll hand it over to me or I'll send you to state's prison."

The answer to that threat surprised Oren-Toole. "You send me to state's prison? Not much! But I can send you there. Handkerchiefs, were they? Now you say money. See here, you smart Aleck! I'm a lawyer. You stole that money. I thought when you offered me ten dollars to do such a little thing it was

queer. Now I see through it. For some reason you wanted that money found in that man's room. You let me alone, or I'll go back to Prestonbury and tell the whole story, and you'll go to state's prison."

Oren-Toole was quick to see the advantage the old man had, and in his most persuasive way he replied, "Mr. Drum, if you hid that parcel in Bradford Horton's room, how did you get it again?"

"I didn't hide it in Bradford Horton's room. I hid it in William Drum's room. That young man is my son."

The reply was too much for Oren-Toole. In spite of his anxiety he laughed. "He? That Nancy boy your son? Quit your lying. If you hid that parcel how did you get it again? That's what I want to know."

"I'm not lying. He is my son, and I hid that parcel. I went to Prestonbury hunting my son. I wanted him to take care of me. You helped me find him, though you didn't know it. I hid the parcel in a drawer in William's room, and was just going out when he came rushing in again. I heard him coming and got under his bed before he saw me. He stayed an awful long time, and I went to sleep. I must have snored pretty loud, for the first I knew he had me by the leg and dragged me out, and abused me horribly. I saw right off that he was my son, but he pretended not to know me. He was too proud to know his own father. He called me a thief and searched my clothes. I told him I was no thief and had only come to hide a surprise present for him. He made me pull it out of the drawer, and he crammed it into my pocket and told me I could have it. At midnight he shipped me off to New York, just as if I was a hog and not his father. I didn't know what was in that package, and William didn't; but you did."

"Never mind what I knew, or didn't know. Here we are at the Albemarle. You get your money. Then we'll go to my room at the Delavan for a talk."

The old man received his money and counted it carefully. Oren-Toole watched the operation closely and his practiced eye saw that but eighteen hundred remained. He knew now that the old man had taken out the missing amount before going on his big spree.

Arrived at the Delavan, he locked the door of his room and once more began to bluster. "Now, Drum-Horton, or Horton-Drum, or whoever you are, I've got you. Send me to prison, will you? Go back to Prestonbury, will you? Charge me with robbery, will you? Where's the cash you took out of that parcel?"

"I didn't take ——"

"Stop your lying. You did. While you were counting it I was using my eyes. I haven't been a bank teller for years for nothing. You're going to Prestonbury as you said, but you're going with me, and you're going to do there just as I tell you or I'll land you in state's prison for stealing. That's what you did. When you found that package contained money you should have said, 'That fellow made a mistake and gave me the wrong package, and I'll go back to Prestonbury and give it to him.' Instead you stole two hundred dollars and went on a spree."

"How did you know I went on a spree?"

"In the morning after I hired you to do the job for the girl I found I had given you the wrong package. You hadn't come back for your ten dollars, though I waited under that tree a good long time. When I found my mistake I naturally concluded you'd found it, too, and made off. I told the bank officials of what I'd done, and my error, and they put a detective on

the case who located you right away. Now hand over."

Andrew Drum laughed. "See here, my friend," he chuckled, "I may be old, but I'm not a fool. It's you that's been doing the lying."

Then, growing more serious, "You didn't make any mistake. You haven't been a bank teller, as you say, for years without knowing when you give away money. Girls don't do up handkerchiefs in brown paper wrappers. You meant to ruin my son. I don't know why. You thought you'd played a winning card, but my son held a better hand. Now you're in a hole of some kind. I don't know your name, but I know your game. I've not been a lawyer forty years for nothing."

Oren-Toole saw he had miscalculated the man he was dealing with. "You're smarter than I thought you were," he said. "I did mean to ruin your son, as you call him, and I mean to yet, and you're going to help. We're going to hide the money that's left in his room to-morrow night."

"But I can't help to ruin my son."

"Pretty son! Shipped you off like a hog, you said yourself. If I were his father I'd get even with him."

The old man weakened as his sense of ill treatment reawakened. "We can't hide the money without getting caught again," he objected, but less firmly.

Oren-Toole, for answer, pulled an Albany morning paper from his pocket, and watched the other's face as he read the announcement that Bradford Horton, a new and distinguished American tenor, would sing on Thursday night in Tweddle Hall in the oratorio of "The Messiah." "See?" he inquired as the old man laid down the paper. "It's dead easy. He'll be here; we'll be there."

"But that will send William to state's prison. I can't help send my son to state's prison."

"Back there again, eh? All right, old Andy. One of us three goes. No court will believe you or him against me. I can send you there, and will, if you don't send him there."

The poor old man hesitated. His memory ran over his bitter disappointment in his son, and the brutality which he had suffered, and his wrath flamed up once more. "Pretty son!" he muttered. "You're right. He wouldn't have cared if I'd gone to the devil. I'll do it."

That night the two conspirators went to Prestonbury.

Oren-Toole did not report at the bank until Friday morning, but with the old man went to a little house on a back street to which the bank teller had moved his mother when his father died. On Thursday night the two rascals hid the money under a floor board in Horton's room. His report to Mr. Elmore was interesting.

"Well, sir, I've brought Drum to Prestonbury."

"Good!" said Mr. Elmore. "Did he have the money?"

"No; he never had it. But he knew where it was three months ago."

"Where?"

"He says it was hidden in Mr. Horton's room."

"Strange the police didn't find it. I wonder if it's there now."

"Drum says he can find it, if Horton has not sent it away."

The police found the money, of course, under Drum's guidance, but nothing more could be done until Hor-

ton's return to the city. Mr. Elmore was angry and sad; Oren-Toole happy and satisfied.

* * * * * *

On the Thursday that the two conspirators spent in hiding, Horton and Sleighton went to Albany. The train from Prestonbury was unusually full. Horton took a vacant half seat at the front end of the car, and near the rear Sleighton found Miss Elmore alone. She recognized the organist and spoke. "There are no vacant places, Mr. Sleighton, but you're welcome to a seat by me."

"Only too happy, I assure you." He helped her move her belongings and took the seat.

"I saw by the paper Tuesday that Mr. Horton is to sing in Albany to-night. Do you go to play his encore accompaniment?"

"Oh, no. I am his guest, that's all."

"Then he's on this train?"

"Yes, up yonder."

"We Prestonbury people will feel proud to have one of our singers appear at the state capital."

"I suppose you must. Well, he certainly can sing."

"Do you remember my musicale? I gave that on purpose to have him sing at it, and he wouldn't come."

"I remember. It was lucky enough for Horton that he didn't go. That was the night of the bank robbery, and if he'd been at your musicale he'd be in prison now."

The girl looked puzzled.

"Don't you remember," Sleighton explained, "about the old man who said he'd hidden a surprise in Horton's room?"

She assented.

"Well, that parcel probably contained the bank

money. Had Horton gone to your house the old man would have gone away undiscovered, and the police, when they searched, would have found the money in Horton's room. He couldn't have proved that he didn't steal it."

"I see," said the girl thoughtfully. "Who gave the old man the money?"

"We don't know."

The train was stopping at a way station, and two men left the seat opposite, which in a moment was preempted by the alert Sleighton, who deposited his overcoat and bag there. "Pardon me," he said, "and I'll go after Horton."

Presently they returned together. Eleanor was deep in a magazine and did not see them, nor did Horton make any sign that he saw her. He knew his friend had trapped him, and was both annoyed and pleased. As he took the inside end of the vacant seat Eleanor, looking up, noticed Sleighton.

"Oh, you've come back, have you?" she said in surprise.

"Yes."

"Did you bring Mr. Horton, as you said?"

"Yes; shall I present him?"

Bradford heard the whole comedy, and was surprised that Sleighton could manage the stage play so well. Rising for the introduction, they stood in the aisle talking for the few minutes that remained before the whistle sounded for Prestonbury Junction.

Mr. Tappan, Jack's father, passed. "Off again, I see," he said.

"Yes. Tell daddy you saw me at the junction, all safe."

"All right. I'll see him to-morrow."

At the junction Miss Elmore changed from the coach to the parlour car on the main line train. Horton carried her wraps and bag to the porter and said good-bye. Seated once more in their own car, he said, "Austin, I didn't think that of you. Sharp trick you played, but you can't do it again. I'll see that girl no more."

Sleighton made no answer except by a laugh, and they sat silent for ten minutes. Suddenly, as if forgetful of Sleighton's presence, his friend broke out:

"Oh, Antigone, Antigone! why couldn't you have stayed dead? You worked mischief enough with men's hearts long ago. Why do you at this late day come after mine?"

"After yours, you idiot?" Sleighton laughed till his sides ached. "She doesn't want your heart, man. All she wants is to hear you sing."

Some hours later in the office of the Albemarle the clerk looked at Horton's signature, then eyed him sharply. "You've just missed your father, Mr. Horton," he said; "at least I suppose it was your father. He was here yesterday."

"My father? What makes you think that?"

"Oh, his name. Same as yours, exactly. He registered here about three months ago. He had a lot of money, which he left with us for safe-keeping. He went out one Saturday morning and we didn't see him again until he and a young fellow came in yesterday and took the money."

"What sort of looking young fellow?"

"Fine-looking, tall, well-dressed, red-headed Irishman."

The clerk turned the register pages and showed Horton the signature. Bradford scanned it and turned to his friend.

"A. S.," he said, in an undertone, "here's a great go. My father and Oren-Toole were here yesterday. Let's go up-stairs."

Comfortably settled in their room, they sat down to consider this latest development. "I've thought it all out," said Bradford. "That precious pair have gone to Prestonbury, and taken the money with them. They'll hide it in my room to-night, and I'll be arrested as I step off the train to-morrow. Oren-Toole thinks he has me this time. Why he's playing the game I don't see, and how he knew the whereabouts and movements of my father I don't know, but, anyhow, I'll beat him to a finish. Oh, Austin, when a fellow starts in without experience to be a knave there's no fool under the canopy that can match him for a fool. That stolen money was in the safe in this hotel from the day after we packed my father off until yesterday, when my father and Oren-Toole came and took it away. Oren-Toole's smart, mighty smart. But sometimes luck beats brains."

Everything happened as Bradford predicted. The warrant for his arrest sworn out by Mr. Elmore was served, and the young man spent Friday night in a cell in the city prison. At the hearing on Saturday morning Ansley Jickers asked adjournment until the next Wednesday, that he might have the case of his client properly prepared. There was no objection urged by the city attorney and the request was granted. Dr. Jickers became Horton's bail.

Andrew Drum's testimony at the hearing was a singular tissue of truth and falsehood. He described his visit to his son William, otherwise known as Bradford Horton. He told how on entering his son's room, having gone without previous announcement in order

to surprise his boy, he had found him on his knees over a hole in the floor into which he was putting a paper parcel. The description of his son's treatment of him, and of his starting him back to New York, whence he had come, followed. He narrated how he had been left by the train, while he was at his breakfast in the station in Albany; how on the street he had been knocked down by a cart and suffered a bad fracture of the leg, and how he had been carried to the hospital, where he had been ever since.

The old man described his meeting in Prestonbury with Oren-Toole, who had given him his dinner and directed how and where to find the seminary. After leaving the hospital he had by accident met Oren-Toole, who recognized him and told him about the robbery on the very night he had been in his son's room; that his son had been arrested and examined for having stolen the money.

"Mr. Oren-Toole told me," he asserted, "that my son had testified that I had a thick paper package in my pocket when I visited him, and that the belief in Prestonbury was that I took the money from the bank. He told me he was going to have me arrested for robbery and tried in Prestonbury. So I told him how I'd seen my son hide a parcel under the floor. Then he said my son must be the thief, and he would take me back to Prestonbury to show the police where I saw him hide it."

Ansley Jickers conducted the cross-examination. At its close no one in the magistrate's office believed a word of the old man's testimony, save that he had previously been in Prestonbury and that his name was Andrew Drum. One person, however, was fully convinced that Bradford Horton was the son of Andrew Drum, and

that his name, as the old man said, was William. That person was Richard P. Elmore.

But Ansley Jickers had not finished his case. He called to the stand Edward Barnes, the room clerk of the Albemarle. At this old Andrew turned deadly pale. He was a lawyer; he saw what was coming and knew what the end would be for him.

The hotel clerk told his story, and at its end the magistrate in high dudgeon stopped the case. "The prosecution has not so much as a peg on which to hang a shred of a case," he declared. "It is a case of malicious persecution. This witness, Andrew Drum, is a perjurer, a tool in the hands of an unscrupulous person. That money was hidden under the floor of Mr. Horton's room by the conspirators the night he sang in Albany. I order the discharge of the prisoner and the arrest of Andrew Drum for perjury and of Oren-Toole for robbery."

The order of the magistrate made a great sensation. Mr. Elmore, his face as hard as a stone, walked hastily out of court. The old man, in terrible excitement, rose. "Your honour," he cried, "your honour, your honour, I ——" but no more words would come. The nearest spectators saw his lips move in a struggle for utterance, saw him throw his hands high; then a wild cry sounded through the court-room. "Oh, my God! This in Prestonbury, in Prestonbury, where I ——"

That was all. He fell fainting to the floor, and they carried him to a couch in the magistrate's room. A doctor restored him to consciousness, but ordered his removal to the city hospital. He was in a high fever before morning, and delirious, and the hospital surgeon reported to the authorities that a violent attack of pneumonia had developed.

When the officers made search for Oren-Toole he had vanished. Before the lawyer had finished the cross-examination he had seen how the case was going, and he also saw the clerk of the Albemarle waiting to be called. Without delay, and very quietly, he had slipped out of the room unnoticed, and Prestonbury saw him no more for many days.

Maxwell had followed Mr. Elmore from the city hall, and they walked to the bank together. Neither spoke for some time, but the silence worried the president and he broke it at last:

"Well, Sam, we've lost the teller. He did take that money after all. The student told the truth about that night in his room with the old man, and Oren-Toole lied to me abominably. I'd like to have the student and the teller and the old man all in one bag, tied fast, and sunk in the sea."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't! Horton's done nothing wrong."

"Only lied to me about himself and his family. He's the son of this old vagrant. His name is Drum, William Drum, and he told me he was Henry Horton's son. He's not a thief so far as I know, but he's a liar, and liars and thieves go to the same hell."

"I think you're mistaken, Mr. Elmore. I don't believe his name is William Drum, any more than I think the old man's name is Andrew Drum."

"You don't? Wait till the old scapegrace is tried. The county judge will get to the bottom of the business. But what'll we do for a teller?"

"Offer the place to Horton. He's competent and honest."

"Sam, are you crazy?"

XI

FILIAL DUTY OVERCOMES

ANDREW DRUM'S trial was to be before a far different tribunal from that over which the county judge of Preston County presided. The officers of the earthly court had arrested him, but those of a Superior Court had also laid their hands upon him. For two weeks he struggled vainly to escape the hand of death.

Bradford Horton ministered to him in all kindness, but made no disclosure as to the antecedents of the dying man, simply asking permission from the hospital authorities to visit him as often as was possible. The general belief, however, was that they were father and son, and that the real name of the young man was Drum, though for some reason no one ventured to address him so. There was something about him that made people respect the name by which he had introduced himself to Prestonbury.

From his father's lips, in the intervals when he was free from pain, Bradford learned the story of that part of his life of which he knew nothing. In the narrative of the years that had passed since he had last seen him he found a new assurance of the power of temptation.

"But how did you happen to come to Prestonbury, father?" he asked one day. "How did you know that I was here?"

"I always had the Glencoe paper," the old man

answered feebly. "I always looked it through each week for anything that might be in it about you. I wanted you to succeed, Bradford, though I had failed so."

Bradford winced. The pathos of the words struck him like a knife as he remembered how he had received the man who had thus wished him well. "You said you'd stopped drinking," he went on presently. "How was that?"

"It's quite a long story," the weak voice began. "I used to hang around the law buildings, you know, to pick up odd jobs. I had to borrow a good deal, law blanks and such things, from men I'd known when I was practicing. Well, I did it once too often. The man I tried to borrow from took me by the collar and threw me out."

He paused for breath, lay still a moment, then went on. "The jar shook me up considerably, and I lay there on the floor in the corridor till a nice young lawyer opened his door at the noise and came and picked me up. He took me into his office and brushed me off and let me sit down and rest, and when I got over the jar, asked what the row was and what he could do to help me. He was the most kind-hearted young fellow I've met in many a day."

Again came that thrust of the knife. The contrast of his own treatment of the broken old wreck was too condemning for the son to endure.

"He treated me white," the husky voice struggled along. "He was sorry for me, I suppose. He hunted up the man I was to draw the will for and did the work for me, and then he wanted me to promise I'd get out of the city and go to my friends. I said I hadn't any, only one son, and he was studying for the ministry and

would be ashamed of me. He said you wouldn't, and he seemed so sure of it that I gathered up courage to come here to find you. He saw me off on the train. I promised him I wouldn't drink any more—that's why I said I'd reformed. He was a good friend to me. I wish you'd write some day and thank him for all he did for me, Horton."

Almost choked with the sob in his throat, Bradford promised. His father lay still for many minutes, resting after the effort of the long story he had told. Then, bracing himself for a final word, "Bradford, you know that Mr. Elmore ?—the one I saw in court the day ——" He did not go on, and Bradford assented silently. "Did you know he was almost the same as brother to your mother ?"

"No," said Bradford in surprise. "I knew she came from Prestonbury, but that was all I'd ever been told."

"Why, his father married for his second wife Laura's mother, so they weren't really any relation, but they grew up in the same house. They didn't want her to marry me—I can hardly blame them, after all that's happened. They refused all communication with her —I don't think they even knew of your birth and her death, and she was too proud to ever write to them. She was bound to have her own way. She loved me, and I loved her—and I showed it," he added bitterly, "by squandering all her mother's money that was left her. But oh, in spite of it all, I did care !"

Under the pillow his shaking hand groped feebly for something. Bradford drew out for him the package of yellowed letters tied with faded ribbon. He clasped it tightly and a smile broke over his face.

"Laura's letters," he said faintly. "I loved ——" the voice trailed away into silence, from henceforth to

be unbroken. The unconsciousness into which he sank, worn out with life and struggle, was never lifted until the end came.

Bradford buried his father in Mount Logan Cemetery, and with him the letters left him by the wife of his youth. The tragedy of the old man's life was over; the young man still remained a living part of the life of every day. But where was the other actor in the drama upon which the curtain seemed to have fallen? Oren-Toole had vanished as completely as if he had left the planet.

Horton, who at intervals all through that fall and winter had been acting as assistant bookkeeper at the bank, remained in that capacity, at Maxwell's request, after the departure of Oren-Toole. It made a strenuous life for him, but by wise use of overtime he met the demand. It was thus he overheard the president and cashier talking one day in a manner to make him think they were contemplating an effort to find and bring to justice the man who had robbed the bank. Before he left his work he asked to see Mr. Maxwell alone.

"You have been very considerate of my feelings, Mr. Maxwell," he began, "and I appreciate it fully. But I want to presume on your kindness now once more."

"Mr. Horton, I can hardly believe that anything you can do or say will be presuming. What have you on your mind?"

"The bank lost a large sum by the robbery. Fortunately most of it has been recovered. Now, please do not follow Mr. Oren-Toole with prosecution, nor attempt to find him. I will refund the two hundred."

The expression on Maxwell's face was a study for an artist—an expression of mingled astonishment, wonder and suspicion. Could it be that this transparent look-

ing young man was after all playing a game deeper than any of them had suspected?

"Why not follow him?" he inquired after a little interval.

"Because he never meant to be a thief. He only intended to make it appear that I was one. He supposed when he took the money that it would be back in the bank next day, and it would have been had I attended Miss Elmore's musicale. His second attempt was more clever than the first, and it would have succeeded had not the old man registered with my name when he went first to the Albemarle. Don't try to find him, Mr. Maxwell."

"Isn't this rather a curious method with a criminal?" asked the cashier.

"He is not a criminal, Mr. Maxwell. That is, not an intentional, vicious criminal. But find him, arrest him, convict him, and you will make him a criminal for the rest of his life."

"But such a course is wholly unusual, Mr. Horton; wholly unusual."

"Yes, I know. But listen! If you ever find where he is, notify him that you know. Tell him you will not prosecute. Tell him you understand how he has fallen, but that you mean to give him a chance to be a man, and will rejoice to know of his success. It's not usual, I know, but Christianity is not usual, not so very usual."

The cashier's look had changed now to admiration. "Mr. Horton," he said, "were I in your place I could not make that proposition, but I will lay it before the directors."

The discussion in the board of directors of a motion made by the cashier that no attempt be made to find

or prosecute the absconded teller was long. When Maxwell was at last asked what made him bring so unusual a proposition before the board, he frankly acknowledged that he had not originated the idea, but that it was the special request of Horton. Whereupon Joseph Jickers spoke:

"Mr. President, I said at our meeting four months ago that this Horton was a new type. He is. I repeat it. Not another man in Prestonbury would have dreamed of proposing such a thing. Old Professor Dragham says he doubts if this man is called to the ministry. Perhaps he is not. So much the worse for the ministry. But he is called to a straight out-and-out exhibition of manhood, and he's answering the call. Some people are saying he is an impostor; that his name is William Drum. Well, let it be; William Drum or Peter Fife, I don't care. He's a new type, and I shall vote for this motion."

The unanimous decision of the meeting in favour of the resolution seemed to show that the rest of the directors were impressed, like Joe Jickers, with the young man's magnanimity. At their enthusiasm the president frowned slightly, but as chairman of the meeting he had no vote.

It was about a week after this meeting that Mr. Elmore wrote to Bradford Horton a letter that grew out of a conversation between himself and the cashier.

"Sam," Mr. Elmore had said, "young Drum must have been at large expense in this matter of his father."

"Undoubtedly," was the reply. "But I would not call him Drum if I were you."

"It's his name, Sam. I know what the position of the Horton family is—honourable and highly esteemed

in their part of the state. For this impostor to call himself by that honourable name is an outrage."

"There is something wrong about all this," answered the cashier. "If we let it alone it will right itself by and by. You would better call him Horton. It will not hurt you, and it will simplify things."

"Sam, I tell you he is an impostor. But this is not what I started in to say.

"He said he would pay that two hundred, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't let him do it."

"You are too late, Mr. Elmore. He has paid it."

"What? Paid that two hundred?"

"Yes, and three months' interest."

"He's a mystery to me, Sam. It must have used up all his money. I can't fathom him."

"Perhaps you haven't tried the right sounding line."

"Are you having any better success?"

"Yes, think I am. I am going on the basis that J. J. is right, and that he is an entirely new type."

"Sam, what do you suppose that sickness and burial cost?"

"Probably a couple of hundred."

"And he couldn't get a lot in Mount Logan under three hundred." The president figured for a moment. "He hasn't earned more than five hundred at the outside. Well, as Oren-Toole got him into this scrape, partly, we're in a measure responsible. I'll send him our check for seven hundred dollars."

Maxwell remonstrated earnestly. "I wouldn't try that if I were you," he urged. "You're longer-headed than that, generally. This affair seems to have got on

your nerves. Don't try to fix things up; drop it all. Do you remember that lamp story J. J. tells?"

"Oh, well, this is different," Mr. Elmore asserted confidently. "Don't you worry, Sam. It'll be all right."

But when Charlie Elmore, going for his lesson next morning, carried to Bradford a note inclosed in a sealed envelope which bore no superscription, matters proved to be far from right. The message which accompanied the check was not long, but it sent every particle of colour from Horton's face and made him flame within with wrath. It read:

"DEAR SIR:

"Regretting that I was a party to your late ill-advised arrest, I write to say the bank incloses its check to reimburse you for the expense it has indirectly caused you in connection with the death of Andrew Drum.

"RICHARD P. ELMORE.

"*To William Drum.*"

"Charlie," said Bradford, when he could command his voice, "this needs an answer at once. I'll write it, if you'll take it back, and you needn't stay to recite this morning."

The boy asked no questions. With the rapidly written reply he hurried to the bank, where Mr. Elmore looked up in surprise at his speedy return.

"Back so soon?" he asked. "Is your teacher sick?"

"No," said the boy, "I think he's mad. When he read your note his face turned white as a sheet, then he sat down and wrote this note off like lightning, and said he couldn't hear me to-day. What's the row, grandfather?"

Ignoring the question, Mr. Elmore tore open the letter.

"DEAR SIR:

"I regret that you have made it impossible for me to teach your grandson longer, and I add, as the bank has caused me no expense, directly or indirectly, I return the check.

"BRADFORD HORTON.

"*To Richard P. Elmore.*"

In his grandfather's face the boy could read anger as hot as Horton's had been, and he repeated his question, "What's the row, grandfather?"

"I shall have to find you another teacher, Charlie, that's all."

"But I don't want any other teacher."

"It cannot be helped, boy. Your teacher will not hear you any more."

"Won't? Well, what's the row, grandfather? What have I done?"

"Nothing. It is all on my account, my son, and you would not understand it."

"Why wouldn't I understand?"

"It is too long a story for this morning, Charlie, and I am busy. Your teacher is an impostor, that is all the trouble, and he is angry at me for knowing it."

Then Charles Elmore grew angry, but he did not dare to show it before his grandfather. Home he went, and poured out his heart to his mother.

"It's too bad. It knocks me for Yale. If I can't go this fall with Elmore Miller, I'll never go."

"Don't lose your head, my son. Mr. Horton has lost his, or your grandfather has lost his, or they have both lost their heads. Don't you lose yours. Just keep cool. I'll find out something about this."

Meanwhile, at the bank, the president was having an uncomfortable time. Taking up the returned check,

after he had quieted his anger a little, he called Maxwell. "Sam," he said, "here's your check back. Young Drum is more fool than I thought. Throws away good money and stops the little Charlie brought him in each week. Won't hear Charlie any more."

"I knew he'd do that. I told you to let well enough alone. Did you call him Drum?"

"Of course. That's who he is."

"That may be, but we're not called upon to rub it in."

"Sam, are you a fool, too? I don't rub it in by calling a man by his name."

"Perhaps he's trying to escape from all memory of the name, and the old reprobate who bore it."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Elmore impatiently. "Don't sentimentalize over a fellow who's assumed a name to make himself pass for something he isn't. Here, take the check, and he can debit and credit himself this afternoon."

Maxwell, however, returned after a little to say, "Mr. Horton will neither debit nor credit himself, Mr. Elmore. He came in just now, took a few things that belonged to him, and has gone."

"Gone? Gone where?"

"Out of our employ."

"You don't mean to say Drum has left the books?"

"Yes; he bade me good-bye, said he could work here no more, and went out."

"Did he give his reasons?"

"No. I asked for them, and he referred me to you."

"Say anything about me?"

"No."

"Sam, he beats me. He's the queerest compound of impostor and gentleman that I have ever known."

"He certainly is a gentleman, Mr. Elmore, and I do not think he is an impostor."

"Sam, I know he is. I tell you I know. I can prove it." Whereupon the first gentleman of Prestonbury walked out of the bank in high dudgeon, more angry than Maxwell had ever seen him.

His troubles were not yet over. His daughter-in-law was awaiting him in the library of his home. He was very fond of Caroline Elmore, the widow of his son, who had died twelve years ago, and the only sister of Samuel Maxwell. A very accomplished musician, she had been for several years the soprano at the "Old Furnace," and there had become greatly interested in the young tenor, whom, moreover, she had no intention of losing as teacher for her boy.

"Good-morning, father." Her voice was soft and clear. "You look troubled. Is anything wrong at the bank?"

"No, no. Nothing wrong." The tone was weary. Then suddenly, speaking sharply, he said, "Yes, everything's wrong. Our bookkeeper has left."

"What? Has Mr. Hobbs gone?"

"No; Hobbs is teller now. That student man, that seminary man. It seems almost as if there were no other man in the city."

"Oh, you mean Mr. Horton?"

"No, I mean William Drum."

"Father, don't call Mr. Horton that. He is a splendid man. Every one calls him Horton, and you will only attract unkind notice. He ——"

The man broke in almost fiercely. "Caroline Elmore, he is an impostor. He told me in yonder room that he was the son of Henry Horton of Glencoe, and I know he is not. I believed him when he told me, but

I have learned positively that his story was false, and right on the heels of my discovery comes the testimony of that old vagabond, Andrew Drum, that he is his son, and that I believe."

"Is it worth while to sacrifice Charlie to that belief, father?"

"I'll not sacrifice Charlie. I can get him a dozen teachers."

"But I don't want a dozen, father. I want this one."

"Have you been talking with Sam?"

"No."

"What makes you so strenuous about this particular man?"

"Charlie's need, father. I have never seen you so unfair, so unkind before. Is it worth your while to spend your strength in trying to discredit an almost friendless young man? I do not know what you wrote to him, but it has evidently hurt him deeply to have caused his action of to-day. And you are hurting us all, and yourself, more. Whatever you wrote, recall it."

"I cannot, Caroline. He is an impostor. He lied to me, and I cannot overlook it."

"Not if it destroys Charlie's chance for Yale?"

"It will not, Caroline. There are plenty of teachers. I can find one. Money will do anything."

Caroline Elmore gave it up and went home sad-hearted. She had never before heard her father-in-law speak so. She did not know of the wound to his pride from Rosalie, which conspired with his chagrin at being deceived in a man he had trusted and his fear because of that man's interest in his daughter to make him both unjust and unreasonable. She saw only that his temper was most unlike himself, and not knowing the cause she could not understand it.

XII

THE PRICE OF A KEPT PROMISE

"WHAT'S that you're scowling over, Brad?"

"A note from young Mrs. Elmore asking me to call, and I can't think how to decline it without making our choir relations unpleasant."

"Well, don't. There's no need. She's no young girl that wants to marry you and run away with you."

"Well, it's just as bad. She wants to talk to me about tutoring Charlie."

"Nothing the matter with that. You do tutor him."

"No. I did. I don't now."

"Since when?"

"This morning."

"What's the row?"

Horton tossed Mr. Elmore's note over to Sleighton, and that matter-of-fact young man perused it. "Bradford Horton," he declared, "you are more or less of a fool. You throw up five dollars a week because a man calls you Drum. He might call me a whole brass band."

"All right for you, A. S., but it won't go for me. I've left the bank and I've sent back his check."

"You have? Well, you are a——" Sleighton stopped suddenly and changed his tone. "I'll stand by you, Horton. Now, you go make that call."

So he called. It was of no avail. She was very earnest, and he very polite, but he would not accede to

her request. As he went away, he was thinking with pleasure that he could number this very pleasant lady among his friends. And she, at home, said to Charlie, "We will have to find another teacher, dear boy; but Mr. Horton is as fine a gentleman as I have ever known."

Charlie accepted the situation, but he poured out his soul in a letter which his mother did not see.

"DEAR AUNT LENNIE:

"You know from the papers all about Mr. Horton and Oren-Toole and the old man who carried off the money. And what do you think? Grandfather believes that the old man told the truth when he said Mr. Horton was his son, and that his name was Drum. Grandfather wrote Mr. Horton a letter which I carried when I went to recite. I don't know what was in it, but it made Mr. Horton awful mad. He won't hear me recite any more. I'll bet grandfather called him Drum in that letter. Anyway, my chance of Yale's gone, and if I can't go this fall I'll never go. So there! Good-bye.

"CHARLIE."

Not satisfied, however, with merely relieving his feelings, and determined to know what had made the break, the boy went next morning over to the Sunset Hill house and straight into his grandfather's office, where without hesitation he blurted out the thought that had taken possession of him. "Say, grandfather, did you call Mr. Horton William Drum in that note I carried?"

The question was unexpected, and surprised Mr. Elmore into answering before he thought. "Yes, Charlie. What of it? That's his name."

"No, it ain't, grandfather! And it's awful mean!" He rushed out of the room in a rage. Boylike, he went

for his chum Elmore Miller and told him the whole story. The Miller boy told a Tappan boy, and so it came about that the Miller and Tappan families discussed the matter in its various phases, and, as was natural, took Mr. Elmore's view. So the story went the round of the select circle, and out finally into a wider one, and ere long the name William Drum was to be heard quite commonly when people spoke of Bradford, though never when they addressed him.

Sleighton came in one night from the Shakespeare Club and entered Horton's room in some disturbance of mind. "Horton," he said seriously, "there's only one way for you to end this talk about you. You'll have to come to it sooner or later, and you'd better make it sooner."

"I don't care what they say."

"Oh, yes, you do! You want friends. You have some, but you want more. You've got to stop people from saying you're an impostor. They'll believe it up here at the seminary pretty soon, and old Dragham'll tell you you haven't a call."

"Well, I don't care, as I said before."

"Yes, you do. You don't want to leave Prestonbury; anyway, not under a cloud."

"Austin, what has started you off on this tack so suddenly?"

"The Shakespeare Club."

"Oh, hang the Shakespeare Club!"

"No, that won't do. I belong to that club; so do Ansley Jickers and Miss Lucy, and Mrs. Elmore, Charlie's mother. You can't afford to hang one of us."

"Well, what has the Shakespeare Club been saying?"

"All but those I mentioned that you are an impostor."

"Where did such a thing start?"

"With Mr. Elmore. He says you deliberately told him you were one man's son, and it has been clearly shown you are the son of another, to wit, of the disreputable old vagabond whom you nursed and buried. Says your caring for him at such expense goes to prove it. Clear it up, Bradford; clear it up right away."

"Did they say that in the club?"

"Yes."

"And did you stand by and hear and not contradict?"

"How could I contradict? You've given me no permission to tell your story. I could only say you weren't any impostor, that I was sure of it, and some day they would be."

"Good! Now let it rest right there."

"But it won't rest there. You've got to tell the whole truth."

"See here, A. S., get to my point of view if you can. I can't tell that story in Prestonbury. Just remember that that broken old vagabond married my mother here, years ago, as he told me, against the will of her family. On his death-bed he was constantly worrying lest the town should know who he was, and identify him with the man they knew before. He didn't want those people who prophesied ill of him then to know how he'd fully justified their opposition to his marriage. So I told him in those last days that nobody here should ever know from me the truth about him.

"Austin Sleighton, I mean to keep that promise. My father's dead, you say, and won't know the difference? I won't save myself by smirching the character of a dead man, nor by breaking promises to the dead. Let Prestonbury think of him as they used to know him

—I'll say nothing to let them know the truth. I treated my father like a brute once, A. S., to save myself mortification. I won't do it again."

Sleighton had listened, much impressed. "Bradford," he said soberly, when the breathless sentences ceased, "here's my last word. You go to Mr. Elmore to-morrow morning and tell him exactly what you now say to me. He'll believe every word you say. He'll recall that letter he wrote. You'll go back to the bank, and Charlie to his Greek. Mr. Elmore will reinstate you in public esteem, and life here will be a vastly different thing for you from what I fear it will be otherwise."

"Sleighton," was the answer, "you're a good man, and that advice is good. But I can't do it. It was the Elmore family who objected to my mother's marriage. No; I've marked out my way, and I must walk it to the end—the way of loyalty to my own father."

Returning to his own room, "That fellow has the spirit of a Bayard," thought Sleighton. "He'll lose his friends, lose Prestonbury, lose that girl, just for chivalric loyalty to an old reprobate. Not smirch his father's character? Where was his character?"

XIII

THE WEALTH OF A GOOD NAME

THAT winter was cold and long. For seventy days Bradford tramped through the bitter weather wearing only his ordinary clothing. He shivered sometimes, but his heart was strong. The spring was a great joy to him. One April evening after a day of warmth and brightness he sat with Sleighton on the steps at the front of Morton Hall.

"I told you, Austin, that people would forget the Drum business after a while."

"I know people do not talk about it," was the answer. "But there are two persons who have not forgotten it, and will not."

"Who?"

"You and Mr. Elmore."

"Humph!" was Horton's only reply, but the silence that followed was eloquent. Horton spoke at last, but not apparently about the Drum matter.

"I'm dead broke, Austin. My capital last September was a half dollar, but though I've made money this year, I haven't a half cent now."

"You don't seem to be worrying much."

"Well, what's the use? If God chooses to have me penniless why should I worry? I can't say I enjoyed paying my father's expenses, but God probably gave me the money for that purpose. Perhaps He wanted to see if I was man enough to meet the demand."

"Do you think God was interested enough in the old

fellow to provide a way to get him buried and the bills paid?"

"Absolutely. Have you forgotten about that sparrow that cannot fall?"

"How much did all that cost you, Brad?"

"Seven hundred and fifty."

"You don't mean it? Did you have it?"

"Not all. But I've made it since. That last day at St. Bartholomew's helped me out."

"I wish I had your dogged pluck, Horton."

"Impossible, unless you're from the same quarry. Our stock was English. No fibre in the world more tough than that." After another interval of silence he continued: "Austin, this matter of a divine call is the most tremendous thing in the world. Since last September I've had call after call to honest independence."

"Do you think your stubbornness about the Drum episode was one of God's calls?" The organist laughed as he asked the question.

"Stop joking, Austin. God called me to resent insult, and I obeyed. Now He is calling me to know the worth of poverty. See that star yonder. He made it. Think of it! He who holds it there keeps it swinging æon after æon, never a hand's breadth out of place, never a second out of time, and He finds leisure to think of me and say, 'Son, I want your last penny.'"

Sleighton did not answer at once. At last he said, "You are a better man than I am, Bradford; a better man. God will call you to something besides poverty by and by," and rising abruptly he went to his room.

Bradford sat on the steps yet a few moments ere he, too, went to his evening's work. On his table lay a letter which he saw was from Samuel Maxwell. It suggested that if Mr. Horton would call at the bank at his

convenience it would be gratifying to the writer. Bradford replied declining the call, pleading his engagements preparatory to the spring examinations.

But the cashier was not a man to be put off by what he knew was a conventional answer. In a fortnight Horton received another letter, more urgent than the first, naming a definite time for the call. Bradford's reply was again a refusal, so written, he thought, as to end the matter. But he was mistaken.

One morning the cashier appeared at Bradford's door and asked him to go for a drive. Horton saw positive advantage in this and accepted. Maxwell went straight to his business.

"I want you back in the bank, Mr. Horton."

"That is gratifying. Men like me enjoy being wanted."

"Wouldn't you like to take the books for us once more?"

"Yes, I would."

"All right. The seminary will close in about four weeks, and you will have four months' vacation. Now for those four months I'll give you four hundred dollars to keep our books."

"Does Mr. Elmore know about this?"

"No. He leaves such things to me, but, of course, I shall tell him you are coming. He will be pleased. He values your services highly."

"My services? Yes, as he would those of a wheelbarrow! But a wheelbarrow and its services are utterly separate, and I and mine cannot be separated."

"But Mr. Elmore makes no separation between you and your services. He knows, of course, the handicap under which you are compelled to live here, but that is nothing against you."

"Please drive me back to the seminary, Mr. Maxwell."

The suddenness of the request startled Maxwell. "Are you ill?" he asked.

"Yes, ill at ease. You have made me so. Handicapped? I under a handicap? I understand. Please drive me back to the seminary."

"Don't be offended, Mr. Horton. I meant no offense."

"But I am offended, sir. In the most matter-of-fact way you call in question my integrity. I came here saying I was Bradford Horton. I am. If I am not, I am an impostor and my integrity is gone. Your president believes, as I bitterly feel, that I am an impostor, and he sows the seeds of that belief broadcast. They have taken root in your mind. I work for a man, or an institution, that would take from me both my name and my integrity? Never!"

"But the testimony of Andrew Drum ——"

"Was perjury. So said the magistrate. Please drive me back to the seminary."

"So you refuse to work for the bank on account of Mr. Elmore's attitude?" As he spoke, Maxwell turned the horses.

"Yes, sir; his and yours."

In silence they finished the drive. The older man glanced sidewise from time to time at the open face of his companion, clear cut and high bred even under its cloud of anger. The conviction was growing in his liberal mind that it was impossible to disbelieve a man whose character and bearing were such evident proofs of his truthfulness. He must hold his own opinions, regardless of Mr. Elmore.

As Horton stepped from the carriage Maxwell offered his hand. "Mr. Horton, I'm glad we've had this

drive. It has cleared the air for me. I believe you. You are transparently honest. May I tell Mr. Elmore about this?"

"Yes. It will do no good, nor any harm, that I can see."

"Good-bye, Mr. Horton. I hope this will work out right by and by."

"Good-bye."

As Maxwell drove away he thought, "He's poor and proud and plucky, and he's honest, too. I must make Mr. Elmore see it." He stopped his horses in front of the drug store and asked that Mr. Jickers come out for a moment.

"Joe, I've a job for you. Get your 'new type' friend to take the books at the bank this summer."

"Get him yourself, your honour."

"I can't. I've tried."

"Your honour, counsel can't. No one can get him by a mandamus."

"Joe, stop your nonsense. I want Horton in the bank."

"Since when did your honour substitute Horton for Drum in your honour's vocabulary?"

Maxwell told the story of the drive, and ended, "Joe, I want that man. Will you try to get him?"

"Yes, I'll try. But don't pay him for his work before he does it, your honour."

"Behave yourself, Joe. I'm in dead earnest. He's offended at Mr. Elmore. For some reason Mr. Elmore is all out with him. Sometimes I think it's because he's afraid Horton will make love to Eleanor. I want you to try to get those two men together."

"All right, Sam. I'll see Horton, but you must see the president."

"All right."

That night Maxwell called on Mr. Elmore. "Sam, you look tired," was his host's first remark after the exchange of salutations. "You're working too hard."

"I know I am. You see, it's heavier with no bookkeeper. I know a good one, but I can't get him."

"I guess you can. Have you made an offer?"

"Offered him a hundred a month."

"And he wouldn't take it? He must be a good one."

"You know yourself he is. Now, don't get angry, Mr. Elmore, but it's Bradford Horton."

To Maxwell's relief, Mr. Elmore showed no sign of getting angry. "That's strange," he said. "I've been thinking about him to-day myself. Telepathy, eh? So he won't work for us?"

"He would but for you."

"Me? What have I done?"

"Written him a letter in which you called him William Drum."

"Well, what's the matter with that? Why should a man refuse to work for me because I called him by his name?"

"That's not his name, Mr. Elmore. Recall that letter."

"I can't, Sam. His name is not Horton. There's not a drop of Horton blood in his veins, and I can prove it."

"Possibly. But it's better policy for you as president of the bank to recall that letter and put him at the books than to let your knowledge of what there is or is not in his veins keep him away from us."

But in spite of argument and plea, however sound and strong, Mr. Elmore remained obstinate, and the cashier gave up the effort. Circumstances, however,

were even then shaping to relieve Maxwell's disappointment and secure his desires. For within a week after the unsatisfactory interview between the two bank officers Mr. Elmore received a letter from his daughter which disturbed him more than Maxwell's call.

"My dear Father:

"I had a letter from Charlie weeks ago concerning which I should have written you ere now. Charlie wrote that his change of tutors had not been a success. A more recent letter from Caroline is more outspoken than Charlie's. She says there is no hope for Charlie's making Yale next fall. Now, daddy, I know what the trouble is. The influence of that mean Glencoe woman made you write Mr. Horton a meaner letter. It wasn't like you, daddy, and I want you to recall it. Go apologize like the gentleman you are. It's absurd to think Mr. Horton's name is Drum. Don't be obstinate any longer, daddy; Charlie's worth more than a name.

"Ever your own,

"Lennie."

He showed the letter to his wife. "What do you think of that, Emily?" he asked.

"I think she's right, as she is almost always. She's too much like you to be wrong often. I've never known you before to be wrong so long."

"What has set you all against me, all at once?" asked the husband almost bitterly.

On the next day Joseph Jickers did a thing unusual for him. He hired a horse and buggy and took Bradford for a drive. The road took them out of the city to the shores of Prestonbury's pride, the beautiful Lake Orsina. They followed the road along its banks three or four miles. Joe did not cease talking from the moment the drive began.

"See that house yonder across the lake in the bend? That's Nick Moon's. Great place for chicken and waffles. Nick's a bachelor. Queer chap. Fine scholar. Could talk Greek with you. You ought to know him.

"See that long point up the lake? That's Jake Branscombe's. Finest point on the lake. Jake's a Dutchman. I expect a fellow could board there for the summer and have a splendid time. What you going to do this summer?"

"I don't know yet."

"Say, your honour, I'll tell you what to do. Open chambers at Branscombe's. Have your town office in Preston National Bank. Row down morning, back afternoons. Couldn't spend the summer better."

"I don't want any town office, J. J. What are you dreaming about?"

"Counsel's not dreaming, your honour. He's listening, and objects to your honour's opinion. Your honour may not want town office, but town office wants him. Bank, you know. Maxwell, you know."

Horton laughed in spite of himself. "Does counsel mean me to understand that Samuel Maxwell wants me to keep books for the Preston National Bank this summer?"

"That is a fair statement of the case, your honour. Four hundred dollars for the summer. Cost you two hundred to live on the lake. Two hundred left. Your honour will be able to buy another carbonate ——"

Horton's roar of laughter cut short the little man's sentence. "J. J.," he said as his laugh ceased, "you play a good game. Maxwell's not in it with you. I'd like to go to the bank to please you, but between me and the bank Mr. Elmore has placed an impassable

barrier. When he removes it you may take me to drive again."

"Your honour declines the proposition of counsel?"

"Absolutely."

"G'lang." Joe hit the horse a savage clip with the whip and turned homeward.

* * * * * *

The day after Mr. Elmore had received his daughter's letter Joseph Jickers called at the bank, and went directly to the office of the president.

"Well, your honour, what's the business this morning?" asked Mr. Elmore.

"His honour is not here to-day. This is a business call, Mr. Elmore."

"Well, what can we do for you, Joe?"

"Nothing for me any more than for yourself and all of us."

Joe was so seldom serious that Mr. Elmore was somewhat at a loss how to take him. "What is it that concerns us all?" he asked again, with more interest.

"Sam Maxwell," was the reply. "We've lost our teller; we've thereby lost our bookkeeper, and if things go on as they are we'll lose our cashier."

"I've thought of that myself," replied the president. "We've been trying to get a bookkeeper."

"We? You mean Sam. He told me about it."

"Is Sam complaining?"

"No! You know he never complains. He's been bookkeeper hunting, and failed. Then he came for me to go on the hunt and started me after the same fellow, and I failed. So now it's time for you to try, Mr. President, and I recommend that you try the same man. You know who he is. There's only one competent man in this city who is at all available."

"I understand. You want me to go and ask William Drum to keep our books?"

"No, Mr. Elmore, I don't. I want you to call on Bradford Horton. I want you to tell him you recall the letter you wrote him. I want you to tell him you are prepared to call him by his name."

"I can't do that, Joe. There's not a drop of Horton blood in his veins." It was the same old plea.

"Very well, Mr. President. When Samuel Maxwell dies have this inscription put on his tombstone: 'Killed by a whim of the president of the Preston National Bank.' Good-morning."

The indignant Joseph walked out of the office with the dignity of an emperor.

"I wonder who'll be the next," said the president, smiling even in his annoyance.

XIV

GRUDGING APOLOGIES

THE annual examinations at the seminary came on apace. The attendance of trustees was large, and Mr. Elmore, among them, became greatly interested in a sharp contest over some doctrinal points in which Professor Dragham and Bradford Horton were the participants. The professor was critical, rasping, pugnacious, evidently intent on discrediting the young student if he possibly could. Horton, on the contrary, was steady, gentle, urbane, though firm as a rock for his contention. Mr. Elmore was struck at once by the difference in temper and spirit of the two men, and in spite of himself was fascinated by the younger.

The discussion caused a marked difference of opinion between the various examiners, some siding with one man, some with the other. Some suggested that the student be dismissed from the institution. Singularly enough, Mr. Elmore became his defender, and saved him from the disgrace that threatened. He had taken no part in the discussion, until extreme measures were proposed, when suddenly he declared his understanding of the young man's position.

"I'm a business man," he said, "and I can see some things you ministers can't. This young man is as anxious for the truth as you are. What troubles you is his new way of putting it. You expected the usual

performance, and you're so astonished to find a man who thinks for himself that you're rattled, that's all. The student is not. He is a very unusual man. I move that the young man be invited to meet the committee to-morrow morning, and that he be allowed to state his views in full without interruption. After that you will be better able to decide in his case."

Only Professor Dragham voted against the motion, the result of which was satisfactory, as Mr. Elmore had prophesied. Horton was passed to his second year, and in addition, at the request of the Greek professor, was offered the position of tutor of the Greek Testament for the incoming junior class at a salary of four hundred dollars for the year.

In his comfortable home on Sunset Hill the banker thought over the events of the day. Before him in its silver frame on his desk stood the picture of the daughter in whom his whole soul was centred. "Lennie," he said to her mentally, "Lennie, I wish that man didn't attract you so. You have never said so, but I know. I have not forgotten the carnation at the concert, nor what Tappan told me about your being with him in the train. He's brilliant, fascinating—I know it. I haven't been fair to him—I know that, too. But I can't have you falling in love with him, Lennie—and if I were a girl, I should. I see what's in him plainly enough. If you were only out of the question, what should I care what he calls himself? His name is Drum, but if he wants to be called Horton, where's the harm?"

Then, with a swerving of thought away from his daughter, he showed plainly that he was trying to argue himself into a sense of justification in what he intended next to do. "That was a great performance to-day.

I've got to have that man for the bank and for Charlie. There's only one way, but I'll take it. He is an impostor, but I don't care. I'll get him."

The butler at that moment admitted Maxwell. "Hello, Sam. You're in the nick of time." He passed the evening paper to his caller. "I suppose you've read that?"

Maxwell assented.

"Young Drum manages to keep himself in the public eye," said Mr. Elmore.

"I think you seem to want him there."

"Yes, he would have been dropped but for me. He astonished me. Somehow every time anything threatens him he manages to make it help him to a higher place in public opinion."

"I think this time it was you that managed, not he. I am surprised at you."

"I don't wonder. I am myself. But he has genius, in spite of the old father."

"Are you quite sure that was his father?"

"Sure? Yes." Then, abruptly, "Say, Sam, this bookkeeper business must be settled. Hobbs leaves July 1st, and I sail soon after. I'm going to put Bradford Horton in as teller—permanently, I mean. He's too brilliant for burial in that seminary."

"Who?" Maxwell gasped in his astonishment.

"Bradford Horton."

The cashier made no response. The two men smoked a while in silence, each busy thinking. At last Mr. Elmore broke the silence. "Will you go with me to see him to-morrow morning?" he inquired.

"Yes, but it will be wasted time."

"I don't think so. However, if it is, it won't be the first time we've wasted. I'll call for you at ten."

"All right." Maxwell rose. "I didn't tell you my wife was in the other room."

"No, is she? We'll go out."

All seated once more in the library, Mrs. Maxwell opened a new topic of conversation. "Did you see what *The Tribune* said about our tenor?"

"No. What?"

"You knew he sang at St. Bartholomew's some time ago?"

"Well, what of it?"

"*The Tribune* says they've offered him twelve hundred a year."

"They have sense in New York; they know a good thing when they hear it. That young man certainly can sing."

"Well, I'm sorry we must lose him. Our church has never had such a tenor before, and never will again."

"Lose him?" Mr. Elmore spoke with animation. "We won't lose him. I shall keep him in Prestonbury."

"You?" Mrs. Maxwell was astonished. "How will you keep him in Prestonbury? I thought there was zero weather between you two."

"Zero? There's no zero in business. I'll keep him."

"Richard Elmore, I don't want you to keep him here." Mrs. Elmore spoke with decision. "He's too handsome, and Eleanor's too young and susceptible. I don't want her falling in love with any student for the ministry."

They all laughed at her vehemence.

"Trust Lennie, my dear," said her husband. "She's in no danger. She'll be out of his sight for two years

and a half. We'll be on the other side of the world. He'll marry Lucy Jickers before that. Don't you be afraid."

As the Maxwells were taking their leave the president said, "Ten o'clock in the morning, Sam."

At a little after ten o'clock the Elmore carriage stopped in front of Morton Hall. Horton opened his door at the knock of the two bank officials. "Come in, gentlemen," he said, astonished, but too well bred to show it.

There ensued an awkward pause. The banker noted the scantiness of the furniture and the general cheerlessness of the room. "I have but two chairs," Horton explained, offering them, "so if you will pardon me I'll sit on the table."

"I see the authorities do not mean you to have too much company, Mr. Horton," said Mr. Elmore with a somewhat constrained effort at offhand cordiality. "I've never had the pleasure of being in your room before. By the way, I must congratulate you on the way you acquitted yourself yesterday."

"Thank you," said Bradford gravely.

"Do you return to Glencoe for the vacation, Mr. Horton?"

"No."

"You will remain here, then?"

"No."

"I think you would find it pleasant here in summer." The president was becoming more ill at ease at the repetition of monosyllabic answers. "The lake is very attractive, and ——"

"But I must have work, and there is none here for me."

"There is. That is the reason of my call. I have

come to offer you a permanent position as teller of the bank."

"Indeed!" Bradford looked calmly at the president.

"Yes. We have concluded to make you teller after Hobbs leaves ——"

The door flew open suddenly and three voices yelled together, "Oh, Brad! you old Brad, you've scooped the shiner; you've gobbled the yellow boy, you've ——" then seeing the visitors and filled with confusion, the young men slammed the door and were gone.

"What did those fellows mean?" asked Mr. Elmore.

Bradford smiled. "I suppose they were telling me I had won the gold medal for Greek."

"That was good news, wasn't it? I wish I was a boy again. I would like to tell some one something in just such a way. Well, I suppose now you will be ready to begin work to-morrow."

"Pardon me. I have no present thought of working for the bank to-morrow or any other day. The causes which made me cease working there are the same now as when I ceased."

"I understand," said the president. "I had anticipated your answer. I am about to remove the obstacle. I will recall that unkind note I wrote you. I should have addressed you then as Mr. Horton. I ask your pardon for the offense. I think it was the occasion of the break between us."

"Yes, sir, it was. The pardon you ask is granted, but I am not prepared to say I will go to the bank again."

"May I ask your reasons for hesitation?"

"Certainly. You have called me impostor so often it has become widely known in Prestonbury. I do not wish to return to the bank branded with that mark.

Then you propose to make me teller. That means permanence. I am not prepared to say I will abandon the study for the ministry to go into business."

"I see; I appreciate. I will make it as widely known as I can that you are my choice for teller, and that you have my entire confidence. And as for the second reason, I heard your examination. In it you were right, Mr. Horton, but you are fifty years in advance of your time. You will be tried for heresy by an unprogressive church. I can save you from that."

"I must take my own risks on that line, Mr. Elmore. I suppose men still have to suffer for bearing witness to the truth, as always they have. I cannot answer you to-day. In any event, I shall ask what, probably, you will not do."

"What is that?"

"Take this"—he drew from the table drawer Mr. Elmore's note—"ask Mr. Joseph Jickers to read it, tell him you have recalled it, and in his presence destroy it."

"Why, yes, Mr. Horton, I will do that." He took the note. "Anything more?"

"Yes. Make in writing your proposition to me to enter the employ of the bank."

"Very well; I will do that."

"Then I will give you an answer as soon as I can."

Thus closed a memorable interview. Mr. Elmore was very sure he had triumphed, but he did not know Bradford Horton.

At the drug store the president asked to see Joseph Jickers alone. The three men sat down in the private office. "Court is in chambers; counsel can proceed with his argument," said the little man.

"Well, your honour," Mr. Elmore began, laughing in spite of himself, "I wrote your friend Horton a letter

four months ago, addressing him as William Drum. He was offended, probably justly. Here is the note. Will you read it?"

Joe read it slowly, quite as if he had not seen it before, and shook his head gravely. "Council wasted no words in his communication, but court gives no decision."

Mr. Elmore took back the paper and tore it into small pieces. "Your honour, that is my decision," he said. "I have apologized to Mr. Horton, and told him I would make this visit to you. That was my errand here. I fear I have been making some bad blunders, your honour."

"Shoot 'your honour,' and shoot 'the court'! It's man to man now, Mr. Elmore. The man who never made a blunder has never been born."

When Maxwell stepped down from the carriage at the bank, he added to his good-bye the remark, "This is the best morning's work you've done in ten years, Mr. Elmore."

"A good morning's work—yes, Sam; good for the bank. But it mortified me extremely. And remember this; I may have blundered in acting hastily, but my opinion is the same; I have good reason to keep it so. That young man is no more a Horton than I am."

XV

"AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS"

IT was to Bradford Horton's credit that the offer from St. Bartholomew's Church of a place in its choir at twelve hundred a year did not cause him a moment's hesitation. Nor was he tempted by the Preston National Bank's offer of the post of teller at one thousand dollars. To each he wrote an answer declining, and to the seminary one accepting the position of tutor in Greek at a salary of four hundred dollars. With both declinations he gave the same reasons: "I have begun to study for the ministry and I must complete my course before considering any proposition for permanent occupation of another sort."

On the steps of the post-office, the evening when he mailed the three letters, he met Ansley Jickers, and together they walked up to the Jickers home.

"What's new, client?" asked Joe looking up from his paper as the newcomers joined the assembled family in the library.

"Nothing."

"Didn't know we had located O.-T., then?"

"No."

"Not interested? No questions to ask?"

"Yes, your honour. But I know and you know your honour's dying to tell. Go ahead."

"Well, O.-T. is in Albany in a department store. Floor-walker, you know. Jack Tappan saw him there last week, and he pretended not to know Jack. I'm going down some time just to see him. Won't it be fun?"

"Does Mr. Maxwell know of this?"

"Yes; court served notice to-day."

Before more could be said, Lucy, full of the news of Horton's New York call, came into the conversation. "Mr. Horton, I'm glad you've had such a fine offer from New York, but I'm very sorry to have you leave us. We are just coming to feel that you are one of us."

His reply was a surprise. "I'm not going, Miss Lucy."

Dr. Jickers dropped his paper and pushed back his spectacles. "Bless my soul!" he exclaimed.

Horton laughed. "Are you as surprised as that, Dr. Jickers?"

"Yes, I am surprised. Most young men would jump at such an offer. But knowing you as I am beginning to, I ought not to be astonished. You are like your father in many things."

The talk ran on, flowing around the declination of the New York proposal and carrying on its current naturally enough the story of Mr. Elmore's offer and Bradford's refusal to leave the seminary for business till he knew more than at present of God's purpose with him. Once more the doctor laid down his paper, and once more he said:

"That's like your father, boy. You've made a good choice, and we'll give you another hundred for your singing next year. What chances young men are having now! Bless my soul! How I wish I was a young man!"

Bradford stopped in to see Sleighton on his way to his own room. "Here's a note for you, B.," said his friend. "I heard a knocking on your door, and found a messenger with this."

The note was from Mr. Elmore, asking him to receive

Charlie once more as a pupil, and to stay by him for the whole summer. "I am very anxious to have the boy make Yale this autumn. He cannot without your help. With it, the outcome should not be doubtful. And he stubbornly says that it's Yale this fall or never."

The letter caused Bradford some misgivings. He liked Charlie Elmore almost as much as he disliked his grandfather. He almost resolved to change his whole plan for the summer. He had promised to undertake work for the board of missions of his church, and had only the day before received a definite assignment for the duty. He faced the proposition for an hour, then wrote to Mr. Elmore declining it, and giving in full his reasons.

But Richard P. Elmore was not a man to be defeated easily in a purpose. Taking Charlie with him, he went again to Room 35. He argued and pleaded, while the boy sat by with wistful face, but Horton's answer remained the same:

"Inclination and personal advantage make me desire to accede to your wish. But I think I have gone too far with my present plans. I might get released, but I hardly like to try. I'm sorry for Charlie, but, Mr. Elmore, I cannot feel that the fault is mine."

So the interview ended.

Mr. Elmore accepted the answer as final and began a search for another teacher, but Charlie was not satisfied. He wrote another letter to his Aunt Eleanor, which he ended with the appeal, "You write to Mr. Horton, Aunt Lennie. Maybe he'll listen to you."

A week later Horton called on the president at the bank. He made no delay about his errand. "Mr. Elmore, is the place of teller yet filled?"

"No, sir." There was a curt tone to the answer.

"Can I have the post for the next four months?"

"I understood you to say you had other plans."

"I did have, but have been obliged to change them suddenly."

"Four months, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"Does that possibly mean permanence?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Elmore summoned Maxwell. "Sam, can you use Horton for teller for four months? Is it worth while?"

"Doubly worth while."

The president turned once more to Bradford. "When can you begin work?"

"To-day."

"Very good. The pay will be one hundred dollars a month for four months."

"There is one thing more, Mr. Elmore. Have you a teacher for Charlie?"

"No."

"Can I have him?"

"What has happened to you, Mr. Horton?"

"Nothing. I have only changed my plans. Can I have Charlie?"

"By all means. What will be your charge?"

"The same as before." Then, before Mr. Elmore could speak further, he added, "Perhaps it will be as well if I go at once to see Charlie and start him at his work. I will be back here after dinner."

When he had gone, "Sam," said the president to the cashier, who stood by smiling, "Sam, what's come over him? He never does anything for nothing. What's in the wind now?"

But though neither man could solve the problem, Eleanor Elmore could have told them the solution. While Horton talked to the father a letter in his pocket from the daughter was guiding every word:

"DEAR MR. HORTON:

"Charlie writes his last hope of making Yale this year is gone, because you will not hear him recite. He is terribly disappointed, and I shall be. Can you not, will you not, take him?

"Yours sincerely,

"ELEANOR ELMORE."

June coquettes with expectation often, but she was showing only her loveliest mood when Arthur Tappan turned in towards the porch where the first citizen of Prestonbury was sitting, enjoying an after-dinner cigar. The view westward was superb. Sunset Hill was well named. Far away towards the low-lying blue hills beyond Icauga Lake the sun was hastening, and long slant rays painted with opalescent radiance the rolling landscape. Patches of woodland were interspersed with yellow fields that spoke mutely of ripening grain; ribbons of road wound up and down the hills and valleys; columns of curling smoke arose from hidden farmhouses; a trailing line of white, close to the earth, marked the track of the evening express.

"Tappan, you're welcome," said the banker rising to meet his friend. "I've been feasting my eyes on that view. I never weary of it, and June shows it to perfection. Have a cigar?"

The two smoked in silence till Mrs. Elmore came out at the long French window.

"Mrs. Elmore," said the visitor, "I cannot conceive how it will be possible for you to find a view, a single

little view, more beautiful than that outstretched yonder, even though you come across the old garden of Eden as you go round the world."

"I'm sure I do not know what we shall see," she answered, "but I know my moment of greatest happiness will be when, after it all, I see this view once more."

"Oh, grandfather!" There was a rush of a happy boy who came tearing through the yard from behind the house, and a shout as, all unconscious of a guest, Charlie Elmore went on, "Oh, grandfather, it's great! Mr. Horton's going to take me in Greek. He is, he surely is! I've been studying all the afternoon. I'm ready for to-morrow morning. Did you know he was going to take me, grandfather?"

"Yes. Here is Mr. Tappan, Charlie."

"How d'ye do, Mr. Tappan. Grandfather, did you get him?"

"No. Mr. Tappan will think you rude, Charlie."

"Beg pardon, Mr. Tappan. I didn't mean to be rude, but I'm just bustin'. Mr. Horton's going to hear my Greek, and that means Yale for me next fall. Say, grandfather, what made him do it?"

"I don't know. Last week, you know, he said he wouldn't take you. This morning he came and asked if he might have you. I don't know what changed him."

"I'll bet I do," declared the boy. "I wrote Aunt Lennie how mean it all was, and I just bet she wrote to him and asked him to take me."

"That's it, Elmore." Mr. Tappan did not notice his host's frown of annoyance. "The young people nowadays can do what we old ones can't. And the girls seem to know how to wind the young fellows round their fingers even better than they used to."

A figure appeared through the gathering dusk approaching the house, and Mr. Elmore rose to meet his daughter-in-law, giving her the chair beside Mr. Tappan. After a momentary lull in the talk, the latter said suddenly :

"Did I tell you that I saw your old teller in Albany recently?"

"No, but your Jack told Jickers, and he told Maxwell."

"Have you sent an officer after him?"

"No."

"Not going to arrest him?"

"No."

"What? Going to let him go?"

"Yes. We have the money. You remember we found most of it intact. The student paid the rest."

"What? Did Horton pay that balance?"

"Yes, he paid it. It is not what you would expect, I know. But we talked it all over. It seemed better to let him have a chance to be a man. He'll never repeat the offense. How did he look?"

"Looked well. He was well dressed and alert as usual. I think he was uneasy at being recognized."

"He will not feel so again. Maxwell wrote him at once that we had dropped the matter."

As twilight deepened into night, Mr. and Mrs. Elmore sat alone in the peacefulness of June, their callers gone. "What are you thinking about, Richard?" she asked at last.

"About Drum. I can't understand him at all."

"I can," she answered. "Charlie is right. Eleanor has written to him."

"Absurd. If I knew it I would discharge him tomorrow."

"That would do no good. Caroline would reëngage him as soon as we are gone."

"Yes, I suppose she would. Oh, women ——" He stopped abruptly.

"Oh, women what, dear?"

"Nothing, Emily. Only I wish they were all like you."

* * * * * *

Eleanor Elmore was at home but two days after her graduation. The house on Sunset Hill was closed, and father, mother and daughter were off for a trip of two years and a half. Running across to Caroline Elmore's for a farewell visit, the girl found time to sit for an hour with her sister-in-law on the porch, where Bradford Horton encountered her as he left at the close of Charlie's lesson. Touching his hat, he was hurrying by when Mrs. Elmore stopped him.

"Let me make you and Miss Elmore acquainted, Mr. Horton," she said.

He stopped. "I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Horton," said Eleanor quickly, "but I am glad to renew the acquaintance." Their hand-clasp was cordial.

"Mrs. Elmore tells me you are to start for your long tour to-morrow," said Bradford. "Let me wish you bon voyage and good-bye."

"Oh, shan't I see you to-morrow?" she answered. "Joe Jickers and Jack Tappan are coming to the train to see the last of me. Couldn't you join them?"

"Thank you," he said, his face lighting. "I should enjoy that. But for fear I should be prevented, let me say bon voyage and good-bye once more."

She offered her hand again. "Good-bye," she said. "Don't let Charlie fail."

One month from that day the Elmores were in Yoko-

hama, and Bradford, by invitation of young Mrs. Elmore, was settled as a member of her household for the summer.

Those were three strenuous months for Charlie Elmore, but he reached the goal. Mother and teacher helped the boy settle his room, and left him, one September day, under the elms in the park where the two old churches stand. The heart of the mother was heavy. She would never again see just the same boy that she was leaving behind.

"I shall be very lonely in my house this winter, Mr. Horton; the more so because it has been so full of life this summer. I wish you would remain as my guest."

"That would be delightful for me, but I fear inconvenient for you, Mrs. Elmore."

"Inconvenient for me? Don't mention it. It would be quite the contrary."

"But pardon me, Mrs. Elmore, I could never repay you for the obligation under which you would place me. I hope you understand."

"Obligation? I am putting you under no obligation. On the contrary, I am rather selfish in the matter. I shall have to have some one with me in the house. I would feel safer if I knew you were within call. And repay? You repay me? Why, I am trying to find a way by which to express my gratitude for what you have done for Charlie. And then, what will you do without the piano?"

He stayed. What else could he do? In his room, as he packed for the move, he said to himself, "This Elmore coil seems to be tightening round me. But I'll be safe out of Prestonbury, preaching somewhere, before Antigone is back again."

XVI

A DAUGHTER'S REPROACHES

THE Elmores were in Japan—old Japan, new Japan, curio shop of the world; nation young, alert, ambitious to know the things known by the great world; open-eyed, open-eared to the sights and sounds visible and audible to seeing, hearing nations. She had not yet taught China how strong she was, though small; had not yet told the Russian bear he could not at will trample down every right of Asia; had not yet become overlord of Korea. It was not yet even the Japan of the little brown man striving to stretch himself to the measure of a statesman. It was still the Japan of the little brown child, but destined to be at some day one of the mighty forces of the earth.

When the Elmores entered Yokohama some twenty years had passed since Commodore Perry had performed his world-famous deed. Americans had not yet been drawn thither in great numbers. True, America had opened the door of the old empire; but the feet of the throng that first entered the portal were European, and for the major part British. The arrival of three such Americans as the Elmores, with their cards of introduction to diplomatic circles, was an event for the world of foreign social life in Yokohama, and Eleanor found herself almost at once the centre of attraction for young British officers, ambassadorial men and untitled tourists. They were a high-bred, polite company, and the vivacious spirit of the girl soon felt a larger zest in life than she had ever known before.

She was discovering what her shielded life in a provincial city had only hinted to her, that she possessed an almost unlimited power to attract.

The gold lace and the buttons, the swords and the sashes, really thought that they were making a conquest of the handsome American girl with the glorious eyes and bewitching hair, but no one of them ever received the opportunity to prove it. Many an enamoured swain found the fabric of his vision baseless, when he dreamed of a quiet corner with her alone, or of a walk on the veranda, or of a tour among the shops. She outclassed them all, and played a tantalizing game of battledore and shuttlecock with their hopes.

Among them was a Scotchman, whose home was beside the North Sea. He was tall, blue-eyed, well built, with sweet voice and pure diction, a university man, who never tired of talking about that strange new American institution, a college for women. With him Eleanor was well pleased.

"Can girls learn science, now? Can they learn astronomy and philosophy? Tell me that! Do they ever marry? Tell me that!"

And Eleanor answered with a mixture of earnestness and banter that delighted him. His name was Malcolm Stuart. Asked once if his name ran back to the royal Stuarts, he answered, "Yes, I suppose. I'm not particularly proud of that, but it's a good name, a very good name."

"It is a great thing to have a name, Mr. Stuart," answered Mr. Elmore. "There are men in our country who do not know what their names are."

Like a flash Eleanor spoke. "But we do not know any such, Mr. Stuart; not any." Her father, comprehending her meaning, frowned.

An obsession is doubly unfortunate when it so possesses a man as to make him unfair, ungenerous, unkind. Mr. Elmore would have resented the idea that the battle between Bradford Horton and William Drum in his brain was hardening his finer sensibilities. Yet the edge of his mortification at having been forced into advances to this low-born student constantly irritated his better nature, and the breadth of the Pacific had not brought him forgetfulness.

Mr. Stuart left Yokohama in advance of the Elmores, but took with him vivid memories of the fascination of the bright American girl. He remembered also that in all their interviews he had not once been alone with her. Some of the other young men had noticed the same thing in their own cases.

Eleanor had a happy time in Yokohama. She made the acquaintance of an English girl who had been resident in Japan for some years, from whom she took her cue as to what she might and might not do. They put on the Japanese dress and the rickshaw men took them far and wide in the city. Laughter and gayety were unending, and the college girl seemed to have been transformed into a butterfly.

All this troubled Mrs. Elmore. She remonstrated, but the daughter answered, "I'm all right, mommsy. Miss Chisholm knows."

At length the mother went to her husband. "Richard," she complained, "our girl troubles me. I never acted so."

"You never had the chance; but such as you had you took."

"But I was at home, Richard, and out here these English will talk."

"No, mother, no. The English girl knows what she

can do here outside the lines of conventionality. Don't trouble. Just be thankful that William Drum is out of our way forever."

"Why, what has he to do with it?" asked Mrs. Elmore blankly. "I never saw you hang on to an idea so long, Richard. Eleanor never gave him a second thought."

"Why does she sing that song, then—that first Sunday song, you know?"

"She's always been fond of that, and you know how a song sticks in the memory. It's Stuart she's thinking of, not Drum, Richard, and I don't relish that, either —England's too far away."

"Hm-m," mused Mr. Elmore thoughtfully. "Stuart, eh?" He did not look displeased.

* * * * * *

Turning northward to Nikko, Eleanor and her father one day came suddenly face to face with the man who she thought had gone below her horizon forever. He was with a group of Englishmen, but promptly abandoned his companions as he saw the girl. "May I have the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance?" he asked.

"Why, yes," answered Eleanor. "But you should not leave your friends for us. We are only Americans."

"If you will permit, I shall enjoy being with 'only Americans' for a little while," he replied. "They are only Englishmen, you know."

So the three fell easily into conversation. "Did you ever pray for a heathen, Mr. Stuart?" Eleanor asked in the midst of it.

"I am neither priest nor curate, Miss Elmore. I am a Scotch Presbyterian."

"But Presbyterians pray for the heathen. I am a Presbyterian, and I do. I prayed for a little Jap man in Tokyo until my arms ached."

"But people don't pray with their arms, you know, Miss Elmore."

"Yes, they do. I found a little Jap in a temple who was too short to reach up to turn the great praying wheel, and I turned it until I was tired, but he would not let me stop. If each turn meant a sin to be forgiven he must be the worst sinner in all Japan. When I had secured absolution enough to satisfy him, he backed away a little and threw himself upon his face and bobbed his head until I said, 'You ridiculous creature, get up!'"

As they walked through the long avenue of palms, Stuart told of his English home. He could not hold his own in the raillery which she loved; his mind was of the matter-of-fact English type whose conversation must deal with literal statements. Eleanor's holiday mood found his graphic word picture tiresome, and her father, noticing her bored attitude, reproved her for it later at the hotel.

"You were not a good listener to-day, Lennie."

"Why did he have to be so stupid, then? It was like taking plain bread and butter on a picnic. This trip of ours is just a big picnic, and I want sandwiches and lemonade and cookies. I can talk sense, if I have to, with you and mother, but who wants to talk sense with a man?"

It was speedily plain that Stuart, however, was in no picnic mood. The Yokohama fascination ripened at Nikko into love, as Eleanor was quick to comprehend.

"He is with us morning, noon and night, father," she laughed one day. "I am troubled about mother—

he certainly has designs upon her. We never go for a walk but he manages to overtake us and get beside mother almost before we get started." She did not add how hard she herself had to maneuvre for it.

She led Stuart a merry dance those days. He tried in every way to encounter her alone, but she never gave him half a chance. At last, the night before he was to leave Nikko, he came upon her suddenly alone.

"I must go to-morrow, Miss Elmore," he began abruptly. "But it is duty, not choice, that makes me go. Had I my way, I would stay where you are always, and ——"

She broke in hurriedly before the sentence could be finished. "What a foolish thing that would be, to be sure! I wouldn't stay always with the best person on earth. What's more, I can't stay with you now, either. I was just on my way to answer a call of duty myself."

They were on the veranda; she turned towards the door that led to the brightly lighted interior. "You see," she said archly, "duty's call is harder on me than on you—yours doesn't call till to-morrow." With a gay "good-night" she passed inside, and in the morning, when Stuart tried to see her for a final farewell, he found she had started early with a party for a tramp in the mountains.

Alone in her room that night Eleanor had addressed to herself a firm reprimand. "Don't you let that sort of thing happen again," she admonished herself in the glass. "It's fun, of course. But you don't want to cheapen the real thing by hearing the words that tell of it from every man that comes along. The man you love must be the first to say he loves you—and where he is now you don't know."

It was somewhat to her annoyance, therefore, after supposing that she would have no more need to use her efforts at prevention upon Stuart, that she found him directly opposite her in the dining saloon on the steamer from Nagasaki to Shanghai. "Can I never be rid of him?" she asked herself, while he was thinking, "Perhaps things will go a little my way now."

Next day he sought Mr. Elmore, whom he found alone on deck, smoking.

"Mr. Elmore," he said, "may I speak of a thing purely personal?"

"Certainly."

"I find myself very deeply interested in your charming daughter. I would greatly like to tell her that I love her."

"Well, why not?"

"That is for you to determine, sir. You know little of me, but I can substantiate all I say. I am a Scotch Stuart and have a fair fortune, but it can in no sense compare with what my fortune will be if I win Miss Elmore's hand."

The father was smiling. "It would suit me well," he thought. "It would end the Drum danger forever." Aloud he said only, "I will lay nothing in your way, Mr. Stuart."

Eleanor was far out towards the bow watching the lookout. She knew instinctively as Stuart took his place at her side that the purpose she had seen in him was crystallized, and she was sorry he had come. Hastily she plunged into the first subject that occurred to her.

"Mr. Stuart, do you love music?"

"I think so. I've never been an opera-goer, but I enjoy good singing."

"Do you know 'The Messiah'?"

"Yes. Every Englishman knows Handel."

"I heard it last Christmas time, at home, and a friend of mine was the tenor. I wish you could have heard him sing it."

"Are you a singer, Miss Elmore?"

"Not a very good one. I've studied a little."

"Won't you sing for me, and let me be judge whether it's good or not?"

She saw a chance to escape from what she felt was coming and made haste to take it.

"Yes, if you won't be bored. I'll sing for you now. Do you know the song, 'I'm Afloat, I'm Afloat on the Deep Rolling Tide'? This wide ocean makes me feel like singing that. Come to the saloon." And she started hurriedly away from the bow.

But he was in no mood to hear her sing then. "Wait," he said as with quick step he overtook her. "I'll hear you sing in Shanghai."

"Oh, dear!" she thought, "have I got to have him in Shanghai?" Aloud she said, "Tell me, Mr. Stuart, what sort of a place is Shanghai? Is it funny like Yokohama?" and she walked steadily on towards midship.

"Wait," he repeated, trying to stop her. "I want to talk a little with you."

"You can talk as we walk, and walk as we talk," she answered. "What sort of a place is Shanghai?"

He saw she was trying to baffle him, and he determined he would not be baffled. But circumstances saved her. One of those strange interruptions which have changed so many things and which we have all experienced came suddenly. There rose sharp on the

air the appalling cry, "Man overboard!" It came from far astern, and forgetting everything but this one idea of danger to a human life she started wildly along the deck and towards the vessel's side.

"Come! Come quick! Oh, come, come!" And ere the man fully comprehended she was gone.

Chagrined and vexed, he followed, but too slowly for her swift feet. When at last he saw the steamer take up the boat with the rescued man a half hour had gone since the moment of that first wild cry. He pushed through the throng on deck to find Eleanor, but she had vanished, nor did she appear for dinner, her mother explaining that she had been nervously upset by the occurrence and was in bed.

Next day she was inseparable from her mother, and the day following he had to stand by the rail and watch her embark in a sampan for the land at Shanghai. His destination was Hongkong, and his heart was heavy. He had changed his mind about stopping over till the next steamer; he felt it useless.

At the port Eleanor received a letter from Joe Jickers, delightful in its characteristic and genuine jollity and lack of sentiment. Mainly nonsense, it yet brought her some little flashes of illumination. One passage in particular interested her:

"Lennie, that 'new type' student keeps right on new-typing with all his might. He forgot how to be like other men before he was born. He has not been charged with a single bank robbery this year. By the way, I ran across Oren-Toole in Albany just before Christmas. He's in a dry-goods store. He pretended not to know me. 'I want some needles with points on both ends,' I said. He answered, real testy, 'You greenhorn, there's no such needles.' 'Oh, yes, there

are, O.-T.,' said I. 'Knitting-needles.' And I laughed, and he was mad.

"Horton sang in 'The Messiah' in New York Christmas week and they paid him with one five-hundred-dollar gold piece. By the way, did any one ever tell you that he paid the bank the money that O.-T. stole? And that he kept the bank from arresting O.-T. and putting him in the penitentiary? Perhaps your father has told you all this, for that was before you began circumnavigating the universe. And, Lennie, did you know that Horton is living at Caroline Elmore's?"

It occurred to Eleanor that it was strange she had never happened to be told these facts, yet the passing thought did not prevent her from reading the letter entire to her father. Knowing his fondness for Joe, she expected a manifestation of interest and pleasure at the letter, and was therefore surprised when his only response was a "h'm!"

"Is that all you have to say?" she cried.

"Is anything else necessary, dear?" he asked, restraining with difficulty his anger at being followed by this unbearable impostor all over the world.

"Did you know that Mr. Horton was rooming at Caroline's, father?"

"Not Mr. Horton, Eleanor, Mr. Drum," he said, with sharp reproof in his tone.

"Oh, nonsense, daddy! Did you know he was at Caroline's? It's funny she's never written about it."

"No, I did not know it. I suppose she thought I would hardly find the knowledge gratifying."

Eleanor heeded no danger signals when her mind was set on a subject. "Is it really so that he kept the bank from prosecuting Oren-Toole?" she persisted. "I've often wondered why you didn't."

"Sam told the directors it was his request."

"Whose request? Mr. Maxwell's?"

"No; Drum's."

"Don't be absurd, daddy. That was noble, wasn't it?"

"H'm!" was all the reply.

"There you go with your 'h'm' again! What's the matter with you, father? Did Mr. Horton need to pay back that money?"

"No, child, no. But hark! That man's name is Drum, and that is what you are to call him when you speak to me."

"What made him pay it back, father?"

"That is rather hard to answer, Lennie. It was probably to keep himself before the public. He seems to enjoy doing that."

Eleanor was upon him with another question more annoying than the last.

"Father, don't you think it was a noble, a generous act?"

That was exactly what he thought, but his daughter's tenacity was robbing him of self-control. "Yes, in a way," he answered curtly. "Now we will drop this subject, Eleanor. I don't care to discuss it further."

"Drop the subject? Why, Father Elmore! A man does a noble act, of which you know, and never tell me, and I hear of it here in Asia, and when I ask about it you say drop it? You're not fair to me, nor to yourself, nor to Mr. Horton."

"Eleanor, I'll not hear you say Horton. That man's name is Drum."

"You told me yourself once it was Horton. What has changed your mind?"

"His father's testimony."

"Father, you don't know that the old man who died was Mr. Horton's father."

"Don't know? Of course I know. Let us have done with this. You do not know men. I do. A man of such grade, such class ——"

Before her father could finish the girl broke in, "Grade? Class? What do you mean?"

"I mean that this man who seems to have bewitched you is low-born. I cannot understand your interest in him. He is beneath us. He can never attain to our standing."

"The worse for the standing," she answered hotly. Then, softening her tone, "What do you mean by 'beneath us,' father?"

"Why, that we are of the genteel sort. You are a lady. In the veins of your ancestors flowed the best blood of the colonies, and those back of them belonged to the nobility of England. There was once, Eleanor, a Lord Elmore of Devonshire, and between us and this drunken pauper's son ——"

Then the cloud of the girl's wrath burst. She sprang from the stool where she had been sitting by him and her words fell on his head like hot rain.

"I a lady," she cried, "and you a lordling? Oh, you are wrong! I am only a plain American girl who despises shams. And you? I thought you were a just, true, sham-scorning American man, and I am finding—oh, the shame of it!—I am finding you, my father"—she paused a moment, then ended her sentence—"only a common snob!"

Then, the colour flooding back into her face that had paled with anger, and with her heart in a tumult, she rushed from the room.

XVII

LIGHTNING STROKE AND CLOUD

ELEANOR and her mother were already at the table when Mr. Elmore joined them for dinner. The girl had regained her composure and serenely did her best to conceal the situation from her mother and to make the hour pass pleasantly for all three. Her father, however, was in no mood to be pleased. Anger, shame and resentment possessed his soul, and he did not comprehend that his daughter's serenity had cost her a struggle and was intended as her peace offering. Anger is often the supremest selfishness. In all his life Mr. Elmore had never been so angry, never so conscious of himself.

At the end of what was for him a wretched hour, "Eleanor," he said, as they rose, "I would like to see you in my room."

The girl understood her father's mood; she knew that the request meant more misery. Resolving that she at least would contribute nothing to it, and that she would make peace if possible, she agreed promptly. "We'll be back pretty soon, mother," she said as she established Mrs. Elmore in a pleasant spot in the parlour. "You wait here."

Up-stairs in her father's room she took her usual place on the stool at his feet.

"I'm sorry, father," she began, without waiting for him to speak first, "very sorry for this afternoon."

The look in her face was of the tenderest love, could her father but have seen it. For a moment he almost relented, then resentment returned and mastered him. His answer contained no acknowledgment of the apology that had cost her such an effort.

"Do you realize what you said to me this afternoon, Eleanor?"

"Yes, father. As I say, I'm very sorry."

He did not heed the pleading in her eyes. "Do those words represent the estimate you place on me after years of devotion, years in which no want of yours has been denied?"

"No, dear father, it was not an estimate. It was a surge of anger."

"You want to honour me? Why then have you disobeyed me in the matter of this man Drum? I told you to have nothing more to do with him. Yet when you returned to college after the holidays you allowed him to ride in the same car seat with you ——"

"No, sir!" The girl jumped to her feet. "Not for a moment. Mr. Sleighton sat by me. Mr. Horton was at the other end of the car, and I did not know that until just before reaching the junction. Then Mr. Sleighton ——"

"That will do. Mr. Tappan saw him with you, and told me."

"Oh, father! What has come over you? You are so unfair."

"Hush, Eleanor. In June last you wrote to him. You ——"

"Father, you go too far. I wrote three lines to him asking him to take Charlie and get him into Yale. I did it because Charlie wrote such a pitiful letter to me. Every one had tried and failed; I thought I would try

for your sake, for Charlie's sake, for the sake of us all. Oh, why will you be so unkind?"

Then once more her father changed his point of attack. "What made Malcolm Stuart go on to Hongkong alone?"

It was a fatal question. The girl accepted the issue. Her tone, which had been pleading and tender, became cold, steady and emotionless. "The fact that he was alone, I suppose," she answered.

"Eleanor, do not evade my questions. I will not have it. You know he intended to stop at Shanghai."

She made no answer, and he grew impatient. "Why do you not reply?" he urged.

"You asked me no question."

"Did you not know he intended to stop here?"

"I knew he thought perhaps he might."

"What made him change his mind so suddenly?"

"Did he change it suddenly?"

"Eleanor, I will not have this. I will have my questions answered. Did Stuart ask you to be his wife?"

"What makes you think he did, father?"

Mr. Elmore was nearly beaten, but pride made him say one more thing.

"Because he asked me, Eleanor, if he might offer himself to you. I told him yes. I never for a moment supposed you would refuse such a man for the sake of that other nameless ——"

He went no further. With one of those swift movements peculiar to women she was at the door.

"Good-bye, father. I'll go before I commit a worse offense than that of this afternoon. I will never speak again as I did then. You have become possessed with the idea that I am infatuated with Mr. Horton, a man to whom I have spoken only twice, and neither time

for more than five minutes. He cares nothing for me, and if he did I would not marry him, should he ask me, until he had your consent and until you had told me it would please you."

She had spoken with her hand on the knob, and as she finished passed out into the corridor. But before the door was quite closed behind her she heard a hurried call from within. "Wait, Eleanor! Wait!"

She turned back to see her father with hand outstretched, risen from his chair. "Did you mean all that—all of it?" he asked in a shaken voice.

"Yes, father," she said proudly, still holding her place at the door across the room from him.

"Come back then, Lennie! Come back!" But before she reached his side the weary brain, overwrought by passion, had given way and he had dropped unconscious into his chair.

* * * * * *

"No, Madam. It is not necessarily nor probably a fatal stroke. It is what is popularly called partial paralysis. Your husband's brain has been under some severe strain, and a time of enforced rest has come. His recovery will be slow, however."

The doctor was right. The struggle with disease was long, but it brought into action the qualities long latent which made Emily Elmore a noble woman. For a week Eleanor aided her mother in watching over the unconscious man, then slowly the tired brain woke. The girl had told her mother all that had happened, and the mother with real loveliness had softened the sorrows of the little tragedy, and spoken no reproach.

"Your father had been greatly disturbed by that Glencoe woman's letter, by what he called Mr. Horton's perfidy, and by what he feared might come be-

tween you and Mr. Horton, should you be under his influence. He is a fascinating man, dear, and your father feels that whenever he is where Mr. Horton is. Now that you have told him what you have, there will be no more trouble. It will all come right by and by."

Nevertheless, one day after her father's mind had cleared, a sight of Eleanor threw him into such a spasm of excitement that the physician who was present gently asked her to withdraw. Before he left the hotel he said to her:

"My dear, sometimes duty keeps us by a sick bed, and sometimes away from it. This is one of the latter times. Were you with your father when the attack seized him?"

"I was. For the first time since I was born my father and I had quarrelled. It breaks my heart to think what I have done."

"You did not do it all. Your father evidently was in an overwrought nervous state, caused by something that had preceded this disagreement. Blaming yourself will not help matters in the least. Just keep well, so that when you see him again he will find you bright and cheery. But don't try to see him until I say you may."

So through January and February and into March the girl waited, patient, hoping, praying, sometimes against hope. At last there came a day when with clear tongue the invalid could speak, and his first words were, "Where is Eleanor?"

Then the surgeon lifted his embargo and called her to her father's bedside. He held out his good hand; she lifted it to her lips without a word, and his smile answered. Nor was the incident from the past touched upon as his strength returned.

May found the convalescent able to travel, and their journey took them to Hongkong. Mr. Elmore's walk was slow and heavy, but there was life in it, and a chance occurrence helped to bring back more robust health. Walking one day along a street lined with the shops that so delight foreigners, he and Eleanor heard an unexpected salutation.

"Hello, Elmore! This is a surprise. Where do you hail from?" The speaker was ruddy-faced and British-whiskered, with success and self-appreciation written in every line of him. He was the Hon. John Eggleston, member of Congress from New York City, and an old friend of Mr. Elmore. The hearty tone roused that gentleman more than anything that had occurred since his illness.

"Come round to our hotel to-night, John, and dine with us," Mr. Elmore added after the necessary explanations and introductions. Eleanor's heart gave a great bound of joy. That was the first note of human interest to sound in her father's voice for months, and grateful tears welled up from the depths of her life and overflowed.

"Yes, come, Mr. Eggleston," she said; "you will do father a world of good."

That night was the turning point around which Mr. Elmore came up to his normal life. It was a happy dinner party, and after the dinner they all talked together until almost midnight.

Eggleston left with a promise to return next day. For a week the two men were inseparable, and when the congressman sailed for North China Mr. Elmore was practically a well man.

October came. The Elmores turned their faces towards India and the homeward way. December

found them in Cairo, quartered comfortably at Sheapard's. A Cook's tour party of Vassar girls was to Eleanor a most welcome change from the French, English and German people by whom she had been surrounded now for many months. Some of the old zest that had characterized her in Japan returned and life began to look rose-coloured once more, when suddenly one morning in the garden she met Malcolm Stuart, with some other Englishmen. He lifted his hat, but passed without pausing to speak.

"Must I go through all that once more?" she asked herself.

Later, alone with her mother on the veranda, she told her of the occurrence.

"Your father will be glad to see him," said Mrs. Elmore. "He was very fond of Mr. Stuart."

"You know, mother, it was about him that father and I quarrelled. I'm afraid to have father see him again."

"I'll manage it, dear. I can tell him I think Mr. Stuart is here, and can prepare him so there will be nothing sudden about it."

For her father's sake, then, Eleanor made no effort to avoid the meeting which otherwise she would have endeavoured to prevent. When Stuart passed her in a garden nook she blushed rosily, but replied to his greeting graciously enough, "I'm glad to see you, Mr. Stuart, and father will be more than glad."

"I return the compliment, Miss Elmore. I regretted that I could not stop yesterday to say how heartily I do so. Is your father well?"

"Very well. You will call to see him, I hope." Much against her will she gave the invitation, which was accepted with alacrity. So it came about that

the friendship between the two men, begun in the far East, was renewed on the banks of the Nile. Day after day Mr. Elmore sought out Stuart, and inevitably the party of three Americans became a party of four, of whom one was a Scotchman, an arrangement which did not terminate with their sojourn in Cairo, for when they left for Rome Stuart went with them.

Poor Eleanor felt the tightening of the cords that were slowly drawing her and Stuart nearer together. She saw her father's evident pleasure in their proximity. What could she do? Any day she might have sent him away, but she dreaded the effect upon her father. So she allowed the cords to tighten, hoping that something for which she should not be responsible would snap them, while each day she knew more surely that Malcolm Stuart loved her. But fate was kind to her wary game of preventing his declaration. Before the one thought that filled Stuart's heart had had opportunity to be spoken, telegrams summoned him imperatively home.

XVIII

WRECKED BANK—RESTORED MAN

"BEEN huntin' all over town fer you, mister." The messenger handed in the telegram at the door of Ansley Jickers's office, presented his book to be signed and departed after the manner of his kind. Bradford Horton tore open the yellow envelope deliberately. He had stopped in at the lawyer's office for a half hour's talk on the day before the closing of his second seminary year. He read the message, whistled gently and passed the paper to his friend.

"My trip to Georgian Bay has vanished, Ansley," he remarked ruefully. "You may have the trout I was to catch."

The attorney read the brief statement of the telegram: "Come home at once. Bank wrecked. Cashier dead. Family ruined.—Conrad Vanderbosch." "Short but comprehensive," was his comment. "Who's Vanderbosch?"

"My brother-in-law."

"Cashier dead, eh? Thief, probably. Was that the bank Henry Horton founded?"

"Yes."

"Will you lose anything by the failure?"

"No, but the estate is ruined. It was never divided."

"Well, then, of course, you lose your portion."

The hour Bradford had thought could never come, after his father's death, was on him. He met it like a man.

"Ansley, I have no portion in that estate. It humiliates me awfully to tell you, but Henry Horton was only my father by adoption. I buried my father in Mount Logan Cemetery last year. As he did not wish his identity known, however, I have had to keep it secret."

The young man flushed with the effort of the confession.

"All that's no news to me, Bradford," said the lawyer. "Oh, yes," not pausing for Bradford's exclamation of surprise, "I learned all that last year at the time of your difficulty. It was only a matter of a few inquiries of legal correspondents. But it's not necessary for you to go around publishing what you've just told me. To all intents and purposes, of course, you're the son of Henry Horton."

"Ansley," cried Bradford, half stammering in his amazement, "Ansley, do you mean to say you've known this for more than a year?"

"That's it, my boy."

"And never told your father? Never told Joe? Ansley, you're a great man and a true friend."

The lawyer wriggled uncomfortably; he disliked thanks. "Cut the compliments, Horton. I'm a lawyer, not a woman; it's my business to receive information, not to give it. Preachers need the same talent, by the way. Now," briskly, "what's your plan?"

"Oh, I'll go to Glencoe as soon as I can arrange it."

"What is it they want of you?"

"I suppose they want me to straighten out the books. Conrad knows I'm an expert."

"And you'll give up that fishing trip with Joe and me?"

"Looks like it. The job may take all summer, from the sound of that telegram."

"You're good stuff, Bradford. Go ahead. It's the thing to do. But let me say one word. When you get there, don't talk. And before you go, don't talk. And when you come back, don't talk. A silent tongue will never land a man in a fool's paradise."

"All right. I'll remember. And apropos of that, Ansley, you won't feel it necessary now to say anything more than you have in the past about my—my father's identity? You see, I promised him it shouldn't be known here. You can understand why he was ashamed, in view of all the past."

"Surely; I'll hold my tongue. But it would be a good deal better for you if I didn't."

"That's neither here nor there. A promise is a promise, more than ever when it's to a dead man. Anyway, I'm getting along all right. Did you know the directors of the seminary have doubled my pay?"

"So I heard. You deserve it. You're surely coming back, my boy?"

Bradford assured him of it and said good-bye. Two days later, alighting from the train at Glencoe, he was met by his brother-in-law.

"Good boy," said Vanderbosch with a hearty greeting. "We've got a pretty tangle here."

"How did you come to send for me? Mother wouldn't ——"

"Oh, mother's away—in California, visiting. Where's your luggage?"

"I've only a bag. I'll take it up to the inn and then come on over to the house."

"The inn? Now, that won't do, Bradford. Mother isn't there, you know, and Anna has your room all ready. Why, you'd hurt her worse than the failure."

That night and the following morning they told him

about the state of things. The wreck of the bank was as complete and ruinous as it was sudden. It had been precipitated, Conrad said, by his discovery in a round-about way that the president and cashier had been making ventures in Wall Street. With suspicions aroused as to the integrity of the management, and concerned for the interest of his wife, Vanderbosch had suggested a partition of the estate. It had never been divided, and Thomas Horton, the executor, was far too closely allied in business with the bank officials to suit Vanderbosch. He had been a large borrower at the bank, and to secure this accommodation had been compelled to indorse for the president and cashier in their schemes. He met his brother-in-law's suggestion with the advice that he mind his own business, but shortly after a check of his, used by his sister, was returned to her marked "No funds."

This was the climax; and when another appeal to Thomas Horton brought only another rebuff, Vanderbosch had notified the controller of the currency that in his opinion the bank was being looted by its officers. A bank examiner was on the scene speedily, and two days after his appearance early passers were surprised to see a placard on the bank door, reading, "Bank Closed by Order of the Controller of the Currency.—Anthony Cathcart, Special Agent."

"Of course it caused a terrible uproar," Conrad went on. "Before noon it was reported for miles around, and there was the usual crowd that collects at such times—everybody wanting his money and nobody able to get it."

"Oh, it was dreadful, Bradford," Anna broke in. "I was so sorry for the poor people. And we hardly knew what to do ourselves, for we'd hardly a cent."

"You said in your message the cashier was dead?" Bradford asked.

"Found dead in his barn next day—suicide, of course. When the books were examined they were found most irregular, and they put the teller and the bookkeeper in jail. Tom disappeared the first day—we've heard nothing of him since. Cathcart wanted an assistant to straighten out the books, and we thought of you at once, so I telegraphed. That's all, I guess."

"It's enough. Conrad, what have you to live on?"

"My income."

"That won't be enough."

"Enough or not, it's all we have."

"How long has mother been away?"

"Three months—we don't know when she will get home."

Bradford asked no more questions. Before noon he was installed as bookkeeper for the receiver at one hundred dollars a month, with the understanding that he could stay but three months. Beginning work on the account of the Henry Horton estate, he found in a day or two that it was largely overdrawn and the overdraft secured by the valueless notes of his brother Thomas, so that Anna and his mother were practically penniless. That night he handed Anna his own draft. "That will get mother home," he said simply. "But don't tell her where it came from." The money represented his savings for the past year.

For weeks Bradford toiled early and late, earnestly, sometimes almost discouraged. Out of his salary he helped to meet the running expense of the big house, so that matters went on quite smoothly, Conrad's income being materially increased by his engagement as attorney for Mr. Cathcart. After Mrs. Horton's ar-

rival, her son moved his headquarters to the Inwood Inn, and no persuasion from his sister could make him change his mind. Night and day the young man worked, until Cathcart saw that he was growing pale and thin, and that the three months would be gone before the work was done.

"Mr. Horton," he said one morning, "this will never do. We must have more help. I am not dissatisfied, but I fear for your health. I can get a man from Washington, but prefer to get one nearer, if you know of any one."

"I do," said Bradford. "I know of a good one."

"Where is he?"

"In Albany."

"Experienced?"

"Yes."

"Knows bank work?"

"Perfectly."

"What is his address?"

Bradford gave it. "I have one request to make," he added. "Don't suggest to him that I gave you his name."

The receiver agreed, and at once entered into correspondence with the Albany man. As a result, one morning B. Oren-Toole walked into the Glencoe County National Bank.

Bradford was working in the main banking room. He turned to see who had entered, but gave no sign of recognition. "What can I do for you?" he asked.

"Is there a Mr. Cathcart here?" In his heart Oren-Toole thought he had been trapped, but he gave no hint of it.

"Yes; he is in the inner office. Who shall I say wishes to see him?"

The caller gave his name, and on Bradford's return was shown in to Mr. Cathcart. In a half-hour they emerged together, and the receiver introduced Mr. Oren-Toole.

"I have hired him as assistant for you. Go over the books with him."

Oren-Toole had never been so uncomfortable in his whole life as at that moment. He followed Horton's lead through the work that had already been done, asking few questions, but comprehending instantly the extent of the ruin and its causes.

All that day the two men worked in silence, broken only by the questions asked by the newcomer for information. The receiver took the new clerk with him when he went to his midday meal, and in that interval from business attempted to learn something of his history, but without much success. Oren-Toole had learned from some source the maxim of Ansley Jickers. But within a week Cathcart had seen for himself that neither he nor Horton knew anything more about banking than did Oren-Toole.

"What's your game, Drum?" Thus the new clerk addressed Bradford a few days after his arrival. Receiving no answer, he renewed his question. "I say, Drum, what's your game?" Once more there was dead silence at the other desk, and neither man spoke again for the rest of the morning.

Nonplused, but still an Irishman, Oren-Toole resolved to try new tactics. Next day, in his pleasantest manner, "What is your game, Mr. Horton?" he asked.

"I'm playing no game. What makes you think I am?"

"The fact that you sent Mr. Cathcart after me. I suppose this is the first move towards trapping me."

"Wrong supposition, Oren-Toole."

"Why didn't you answer me yesterday when I asked you that question?"

"I have no recollection of your speaking to me yesterday."

"I did. I asked you this same question twice."

"Well, to be frank with you, I heard you ask the question twice, but as it was not addressed to me, I paid no attention."

"Not addressed to you? Isn't your name Drum?"

"No."

"Wasn't that old chap's name Drum?"

"No."

"Well, what was it?"

"What did he tell you it was?"

"He told me his name was Andrew Drum, and that you were his son. I suppose the whole story was a lie. I never believed him."

"No, not the whole. I am the son of that old man."

"Well, what's your name, then?"

"As you know, my name is Horton. I treated my father in a very unfilial sort of way when I shipped him off with that money, but it was lucky for you I did. If I'd kept him over night and my room had been searched in the morning, where would you be now?"

Oren-Toole subsided uncomfortably into silence, not, however, entirely satisfied about Horton and his intentions. Late that afternoon he could bear his uncertainty no longer.

"Say, if that old chap was your father," he asked abruptly, "how do you come by your name? Is it anything to do with these folks here?"

"My name is that of my adopted father, Henry

Horton, the founder and first president of this bank. Thomas Horton is his son."

"So that's it. You might have said so at first."

"I had not the heart," said Bradford with a smile, "to deprive you of the pleasure of asking questions, Mr. Oren-Toole."

The other laughed with a mixture of pique and chagrin. "Did you send Cathcart after me?" he asked presently.

"He asked if I knew of a competent bank clerk who could help him here, and I gave him your name."

"What for?"

"To help Mr. Cathcart out, and to help you to be a man."

Oren-Toole was silent for a half-hour. It is safe to say that he did more thinking than he had ever done before in an equal time. How his thoughts ran appeared when he next spoke.

"Why didn't Elmore and Maxwell go after me when they found where I was?"

"I had previously asked them, if they ever did learn where you were, not to go after you, and they had agreed not to do so."

"What made you do that?" Oren-Toole could hardly believe his ears.

"Well, for two or three reasons. You did not mean to steal that money; you meant to have it appear that I stole it. The money was not lost; it was all returned to the bank. The only person hurt in any way was myself, and I was not willing to have you sent to state's prison on my account. That would have made a criminal of you, and there's too good stuff in you to make a criminal of. You're going to be a straightforward sort of a man hereafter, I reckon."

There was another silence, while Horton wondered how Oren-Toole would begin his next attempt. He was not kept wondering long.

"The old man got away with part of that money on a big spree in Albany. They could have held me liable for that."

"It was returned to the bank."

"Who paid it back? You?"

"Yes."

When his assistant came in next morning Bradford was already at work.

"Oren-Toole," he began, "will you ——"

"Oh, cut it out, Horton, cut it out!"

"I don't understand. Cut what out?"

"That Oren-Toole business. My name's not Oren-Toole, any more than yours is Drum. I'm just Barney O'Toole, a red-headed Irishman. I fooled the Prestonbury crowd, but I can't keep it up with you."

One of Bradford's hands was on Barney's shoulder, while the other held the Irishman's in a hearty clasp. "That's worth while. That's a big step towards manhood. It's a clear path now, Barney." The bars between the two were down at last.

"You can count on me," said the clerk, "till your dying day, Mr. Horton."

"I'm Bradford, Barney," was the quiet reply.

So began a friendship that is still the talk of Prestonbury.

At noon, as Barney went out for lunch, Bradford handed him a note. "Will you leave this at the Horton house as you pass?" he asked.

The messenger found Mrs. Horton and her daughter on the porch, and handed the missive to Mrs. Vanderbosch.

"What is that, Anna?" inquired her mother when he had gone.

"A note from Bradford."

"Oh!" very coldly. "Anything particular?"

"Only our week's money."

"Money? Our week's money? What do you mean?"

Then followed the whole story of Bradford's generosity, which the mother had not heard before.

"Do you mean to say," she asked finally, "that Bradford sent me the money to come back from California?"

When Anna answered "Yes," the mother said no more. But in the afternoon Conrad Vanderbosch carried a note to the bank, and that night Bradford dined at the old house. Mother and son spent the evening together in her room. What happened in the interview neither ever told, but Rosalie Horton came from it a chastened, softened woman, and Bradford moved back from Inwood Inn to his old room next day.

"Conrad," said Anna, "this bank failure has been the happiest event since we were married. The breach between Bradford and mother is closed forever. We are all one again now, but Thomas. Poor Thomas! I wonder where he is?"

XIX

A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AUCTION

"MR. MAXWELL, will this bank lend me six thousand dollars?"

"What's up? Going into business?"

"No, I want to buy a house."

"Going to be married?"

"Married? I should say not! I just want to buy a house."

"What's the security?"

"The house. It's worth ten thousand dollars. It's my mother's, gone down in the wreck of the Glencoe Bank, and I don't want her turned out-of-doors."

"When do you want the money?"

"In October."

"I'll put the matter into Ansley's hands—he's our attorney. If he says it's all right I'll see you through."

"Good," said Bradford. "That'll be satisfactory."

Ten days later Ansley Jickers sent for him. It was now the last week in September and Bradford had been back in Prestonbury almost a month.

"I've looked up that house matter," said the lawyer. "Going to be sold at auction, I learn. You want to bid it in, eh?" Bradford assented, and the other went on, "I've been through the title, too. Title's all right, but the valuation is too high."

"It's one of the best houses in Glencoe, Ansley. It cost twice that appraisement to build."

"No doubt. But the question with real estate is not what went into it but what you can get out. When a man wants a house, that house can get what it thinks itself worth; but when a house wants a man, it can only get what the man chooses to give. You put a six-thousand-dollar mortgage on that house and you'll never get your money out of it."

"That's no reason why I shouldn't put it in. I'm not going into a real estate deal."

"Don't you mean to sell, some day?"

"No. You know I mean to give that house to my mother."

"Yes, I know. I also know something that you don't; namely, you're not going to Glencoe to buy that house."

"Who is?"

"I am. You would get rattled. The moment the house was put up you would bid six thousand dollars. Everybody knows you in Glencoe. Some fellows would say, 'I told you so. Those Hortons have money hid away, and I'll make them come down with more.' Then he would overbid you and where would you be?"

Bradford saw the point. "That's so, Ansley; but I hate to bother you."

"Bother be hanged," growled the lawyer. "What's friendship for?"

The two men talked for an hour, and when Bradford left the lawyer knew the main features of the situation. Two hundred and forty-five acres of the Horton farm would be sold first; then the big house and five acres adjoining; then Mrs. Rosalie Horton's town house. He also learned that the claim of the bank against the Horton estate on account of bank stock assessment was forty thousand eight hundred dollars. His last words

to Bradford were, "Don't you tell a soul on earth what is in your mind."

Two days later they met on the street. "I forgot," said Bradford, "to tell you that Oren-Toole is with the receiver of the Glencoe Bank. He came in a short time before I left. Mr. Cathcart brought him to me one day and introduced him as B. Oren-Toole. Naturally we talked some, and one day when I had addressed him as 'Oren-Toole,' he broke out, 'Cut that out, Horton. I'm just Barney O'Toole, a red-headed Irishman.'"

"He did? That's good. He's coming to his senses. Bradford, I am not much influenced by likes and dislikes, but I must say I never saw that teller that I didn't want to kick him out of the bank."

"Why?"

"For shamming so. I've known all about him and his history for years. B. Oren-Toole! My, what a fool a fool can be when he really wants to be a fool! Why, the little red-headed, freckle-faced boy was as plain in him in evening clothes as when he used to run barefoot with the pigs at Devil's Spring."

"So you knew when he was teller that he was Barney O'Toole? Ansley, is there anything you don't know?"

"Nothing about Barney. Good-bye."

The immediate result of that conversation was a letter from Ansley to Oren-Toole, Glencoe, which brought surprise to its recipient. "I shall drop in at the bank some day," wrote Ansley. "When I do, be sure not to recognize me, or make any sign that you ever saw me. I will see you the same night in my room at the Inwood Inn." What was the game, Barney wondered as he read.

A few mornings later he saw Ansley pass the bank window and did not turn around to see who the caller

was when the bank door opened. He heard the question, "Is Mr. Cathcart in?" and he answered without turning, "Yes. Pass into the inner office."

Cathcart looked up as the stranger presented his card.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Jickers?"

"I understand there is to be a sheriff's sale to satisfy a judgment decree against the estate of Henry Horton, deceased."

"Yes; the sale is advertised for to-morrow."

"The property consists of a farm and two houses; and the amount of the claim is forty thousand eight hundred dollars?"

"That is correct."

"Will the property bring that?"

"No."

"What will the farm bring, probably?"

"Twelve or thirteen thousand dollars. I have offered it to a man who says he means to buy it. He refused my offer on the ground that he can buy it more cheaply at auction."

"Suppose some one should go above thirteen thousand—what then?"

"I think the man would go above the bidder."

"Will the dwellings be up before or after the farm?"

"Afterwards. The large one first."

"What will they bring?"

"The two? Oh, perhaps fifteen thousand dollars."

"Will you sell me that large house?"

"No. It will have to go under the hammer. I have a customer who has wanted it for a summer hotel for a long time. I offered it to him for fifteen thousand, but he said he could buy it at auction better."

"Your customer would have done well to take your offer. He will not get it for that now."

"Are you a bidder?"

"Well, I represent a man who has had his eye on that house for a long time. I have heard him say it is worth twenty thousand dollars. I must tell you that I intend to further the interests of my client in every way possible."

"Then do I understand that you will bid twenty thousand for that property?"

"I did not say I should. But I will say your customer will not get it for a song."

His talk with the receiver finished, Ansley Jickers proceeded to call upon Mrs. Horton and her daughter, introducing himself simply as a friend of Bradford. The elder lady, quick to recognize a man of no ordinary rank and breeding, made him welcome, with a little added touch to her appreciation of Bradford, if such a man as this was numbered among his friends.

"When did you see my boy?" she asked. "Is he quite well?"

"I saw him two days ago, madam, and he was in excellent health."

"You are kind to call, Mr. Jickers," said Anna. "We are always glad to hear directly from Bradford."

The conversation ran on easily, touching oftenest on Bradford's nobility of character, while beneath the surface of the talk the lawyer was thinking, "The old lady doesn't mean to admit that he's not her own, now he's turned out so well. She doesn't know how much I know." And in the mother's mind the thought repeated itself, "Then my letter did not harm him, if men like this are his friends. Oh, I am thankful!"

"I suppose," she said at last, "that since you live in Prestonbury you are acquainted with a Mr. Elmore—Richard P. Elmore. Is he still living?"

"Very much so, madam. Just now, however, he is abroad and will not return for a year yet. I infer you may have known him?"

"Yes, many years ago."

"It is strange that Bradford should not have mentioned him," proceeded Ansley, enjoying his own duplicity. He knew why his friend had not mentioned the subject. "He prepared his grandson for Yale, and has his room at present in the home of the boy's mother, young Mrs. Elmore."

Anna replied before her mother could. "Oh, he told us of the boy he tutored, and of what a delightful home he had, but he never mentioned the name."

Mrs. Horton let the conversation slip away from her, while over and over in her mind she gave thanks that her letter had done no harm. None the less, when the caller was gone, she sat down and spent an hour or more on a letter to Mr. Elmore, which she inclosed in a note to Ansley Jickers at his Prestonbury address.

"I intrust to you the inclosed letter," she wrote. "Please do not deliver it while I am living." To herself she added, "There is no need for him to know, at least for Bradford's sake. The letter did no harm."

Punctually at midnight Barney O'Toole knocked at the door of the lawyer's room in the Inwood Inn. Ansley went straight to the heart of his business.

"I asked you to meet me at this late hour, Mr. Oren-Toole ——"

"Drop it, Mr. Jickers. I am Barney O'Toole. That student of yours, that singer, that whatever, whoever he is, has jolted the Oren-Toole out of me. I've been shamming on the name business for a good while, but I've quit."

"Good, Barney. I knew your father. I knew when

you moved your mother into town. I've known all about you, of course. But that isn't what we're here for now. I'm here to save for Mrs. Horton all that can be saved out of this wreck, and I want your help."

"All right. I'll help."

"The farm must sell for seventy dollars an acre. Henry Horton always held it at a hundred."

"That would make seventeen thousand one hundred and fifty dollars, Mr. Jickers."

"Those are my figures. Now, the big house must bring twenty thousand dollars and the small one four thousand."

"That's more than the whole claim, Mr. Jickers," said Barney in surprise.

"Of course. More is always better than less, when it comes to paying debts. Our job, you see, is to get those prices. There's an old farmer here, I'm told, who wants the farm, and I know some one who will bid the property up till the price that farmer offers reaches my figure."

"Good. And where do I come in?"

"Presently. I'll bid on the big house myself and make it sell for the twenty thousand dollars. And I want you to buy the small one."

"I see. Well, I've no money to buy houses with myself, but I think I see your game. Horton's trying to save that house for his mother, isn't he?"

"Exactly. As to money, here's your four thousand dollars. Keep cool to-morrow and don't get rattled. Start the bidding low and keep it low for a while. There'll be some one bidding against you, but when you say four thousand the hammer will fall like a shot. You can hold your tongue?"

"Sure."

"Then we're started in good shape. Money all there?" as Barney, with the banking instinct, began to count it. His signature to the receipt for it closed an evening's work very satisfactorily to Ansley Jickers.

The summer hotel man, arriving from New York, had been informed by Cathcart on that same evening that he had a competitor on the ground ready to pay twenty thousand dollars for the big house.

"Well," he said with a shrug, "if he gets that house he'll pay more than twenty thousand for it."

An auction of farm property was always an event to bring into town farmers from all directions, and such a sale as this of the Horton estate was most unusual. Glencoe was crowded with those who wished to watch the bidding.

No one ever knew what started Donald Cameron, proprietor of the Inwood Inn, bidding on the farm. No sooner had Alanson Williams made the first bid of five thousand dollars than Cameron cried, before the auctioneer could repeat the offer, "Six thousand." There was an astonished buzzing in the crowd, while the auctioneer rattled on, and after three minutes, which seemed many times longer, a third bid was heard. "Eight thousand dollars!" called Williams.

"Nine," said Cameron.

"What's that Scotchman got into his head?" asked Williams of a neighbour.

"Trying to bother you for a Welshman, probably."

"I'd let him have it if it didn't join my farm. Anyhow, he'd put it on the market by and by and make a lot of money on it, and by gracious he shan't do it. I'll beat him out—I want it myself. Eleven thousand!" he called, and as that bid was raised another thousand,

ventured a sum that he thought would end the bidding. "Fifteen thousand!" he said with an air of finality. The move was rash. "Sixteen thousand," said Donald Cameron quietly.

Pale under his tan and with grim determination in his voice, Williams raised the price by five hundred dollars. Then, "Seventeen thousand," said Cameron, still quietly.

Williams almost lost his nerve. He hesitated. But the thought, "Shall I let that whiskey-selling Scotchman beat me?" turned the scale, and unflinching he cried, "Seventeen thousand five hundred!"

"Raise him, Donald, raise him!" came the cry from the crowd as a pause followed. But Donald Cameron had fulfilled his mission, and the farm was knocked down to the last bidder. Ansley Jickers had won the first move in the game.

The big house was next put up. "I'm offered five thousand dollars," called the auctioneer, "for the Henry Horton home and five acres of land. That offer is absurd. It cost forty thousand to build, and I'm offered five thousand. Five thousand, five ——"

"Fifteen thousand!" called Ansley Jickers.

"Fifteen thousand," echoed the auctioneer. "Now you're coming to your senses, gentlemen. That sounds like business. Who's the bidder?"

Ansley raised his hand. Cathcart, who stood by the auctioneer, spoke to him in a tone not heard by the crowd.

"All right," said the auctioneer. "A responsible man bids fifteen thousand. Fifteen thousand, fifteen thousand, fifteen, fifteen, going at fifteen ——"

"One hundred!" cried a bidder.

"Fifteen one, fifteen one, going at fifteen one ——"

"Two hundred!" called the New York man.

"Sixteen thousand!" cried Ansley Jickers in a high voice, and apparently much excited. "Sixteen thousand, I say!"

Steadily the song of the auctioneer went on. "Sixteen thousand, sixteen thousand; no more bids? Where's your sand, gentlemen? Going at sixteen thousand one; going at sixteen thousand two ——"

"Sixteen thousand one hundred!" cried a voice. Ansley Jickers paid no heed to that. But the New Yorker did. He was growing excited and weary, and he thought one more bid might end it. "Seventeen thousand!" he called.

But no sooner were the words repeated by the auctioneer than Ansley Jickers rushed wildly up to the stand, and shaking his fist in the seller's face yelled, "Nineteen thousand, do you hear? Nineteen thousand!"

There was a hum in the throng and then a cheer. The move had the effect Ansley anticipated. The New Yorker lost his head. He wanted the matter ended. Striding out into the little open space before the auctioneer's stand, he stood glaring at his opponent for a moment, then roared out, "Twenty thousand, twenty thousand; I tell you, twenty thousand!"

The auctioneer was happy. He had not been a party to such lively work for a long time. He rattled off his calls with great volubility, expecting to hear the competitor call twenty-one thousand. But no; there was no response to his vociferous appeals. "Once, gentlemen, twice, and—sold for twenty thousand," and the hammer fell.

Cathcart spoke to the auctioneer. "These two sales make thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars. The

whole claim is less than forty-one thousand. If that other house brings four thousand it will cover all costs. Knock it down at four thousand." At which price it went to Barney O'Toole.

That night Donald Cameron gave his wife twenty-five dollars.

"That's pin money for you. I earned that to-day at the auction by singing."

"Singing?"

"Yes. I bid a little on the farm. A man called Jickers said a man who sang as well as I did ought to have encouragement."

XX

HORSEMAN AND LOVER

AUSTIN SLEIGHTON returned to the seminary in September a changed man. He had spent his vacation preaching to a mission congregation in the town of Fairthorne, Minnesota. He had accomplished three things that satisfied him well—proved to himself that he really had power as a preacher; become devoted as never before to out-of-door life; and lost all the "old young man" manner which had heretofore been his characteristic. Horton hardly knew him when they met, so erect, so alert, so tanned by the weather was he. He would have passed very well for a civilized Indian.

His first move after getting settled into work was to join the city's athletic club. At sight of him one day on horseback, Joe Jickers was convulsed, and when he appeared in a finely fitting custom made suit, Horton remonstrated. "You're getting reckless with your money, A. S.," said he.

"Well, it's my money, isn't it?" was the answer. "I've never had much to be reckless with before; I have now, a little. Those Fairthorne men were mighty good to me."

"Just where is Fairthorne?"

"On the southern edge of the lumber region in northern Minnesota. Great country up there! A man could go into the lumber camps and no person on earth could find him, unless by accident." It was a random

remark, but there came a time when Bradford Horton remembered it.

It was towards the last of September when Joe Jickers one day poured out his soul to Bradford in regard to Sleighton's transformation. "Brad," he said, "that organist man is a teetotal surprise to this court. Yes, sir, tee; yes, sir, total; that's what he is. Court never thought him anything but a do-re-mi man; a ten-finger-on-the-keys man; and here he turns out to be a good red-blooded fellow; a regular out-of-doors fellow; a horseback fellow. But say, Brad, tell him to stop. Court will have to adjourn if he doesn't."

"Stop what, J. J.?"

"Making athletic exhibitions with the back of a horse for his campus."

"What do you mean, J. J.?"

"Haven't you seen the organist on horseback? Then you have missed the best circus of the century. On the organ stool he's all right. But on a horse! Tell him to get himself strapped on next time he rides. It'll be better for him to sit on his horse strapped fast than to have the coroner sit on him. Organists can't play much after coroners sit on 'em."

"Your honour, the defense rests," laughed Bradford.

It was that very afternoon when Bradford, dropping in at Sleighton's room, found him in a short coat, with a riding whip in his hand. "Where are you going, A. S.?" he inquired guilelessly.

"Off horsebacking, that's all."

"A. S., I don't think it's a bit social for you to go off riding all alone. I'd like to go with you if I could ride, but I could never do it as you do. I don't believe there's another man in Prestonbury can match you. A wooden Indian might, but no living man."

"Brad, are you laughing at me?" demanded Sleighton.

"Why not? Didn't you laugh at me when you pulled me out of the snow-bank?"

"Oh, well, that was different. You looked ridiculous then."

"Well, what about you on a horse, A. S.? Jickers says, 'There's something ridiculous about the combination of horse and man, and it's not the horse.' He says, 'I've seen that horse when Do-Re-Mi wasn't on him.'"

"Jickers said that?"

"Just so. Said also that you'd better get yourself strapped on or you'll go leap-frog fashion over the horse's head."

Sleighton beat his leg with the lash of the whip. "How'll I get exercise, then? I've got to have outdoor exercise."

"The lake's good exercise. Come and row with me."

"No, you don't, Brad. I've been up, and the boats up there are tubs, the whole lot of them."

"Mine isn't. I know a boat when I see one."

Though Sleighton after this relegated his riding whip and boots to the background where unused articles accumulate, it took some days of persuasion and a visit to the boat-house where Bradford kept his slender St. Lawrence River boat to convince him that there was real sport to be had on the lake, which had become Horton's favourite outing place. Bradford had discovered its charm the year before and had purchased his boat in the spring. Night after night he had spent on the water, alone or with Mrs. Elmore or one of the Jickers trio, rowing or paddling or drifting with the evening breeze as twilight fell. He had made the

acquaintance of Joe's attractive friend, Nick Moon, and had often thought what an ideal place for a summer holiday was Branscombe's house, hidden away in the trees on the point. Once Sleighton was converted into willingness to accompany, his pleasure in the lovely sheet of water was redoubled and more than once a week on until winter the two launched their little craft upon the placid waters.

One evening they came up with Joe and Lucy Jickers and Alice Lee. Joe caught sight of the name on the bow of Horton's boat.

"Ghost of Blackstone!" he shouted, "what a name! 'Anti-gone!' Who's your aunty, son, and where's she gone? Where has she gone?"

Sleighton was rowing. His oars missed the water, and he fell backward into the bottom of the boat, laughing helplessly. Horton seized the paddle and moved swiftly up to the Jickers party.

"Is that what you call catching a crab, Mr. Sleighton?" asked Alice Lee.

"No, Miss Lee. That is what is called hitting the bull's-eye," replied Sleighton, and again he laughed.

"Now what is there to laugh at? We don't see anything funny," broke in Lucy Jickers.

"No, you don't, but Horton does."

"Shut up, A. S.," said Bradford, and his face was as red as the afterglow in the sky. To his relief, Joe struck in with a brisk change of subject.

"Brad, we're on our way to Nick Moon's," he said. "No, Lucy, don't worry over the Do-Re-Mi man—he'll get over it. Come along," turning back to Bradford. "We're going for supper on the shore."

"Yes, do," chimed in Lucy, and Bradford assented gladly.

Nick saw their boats approaching and was waiting on the shore. "Hello, 1827!" he called as they drew into the shallows. "Evenin', Miss Lucy. Evenin', Miss Alice. Evenin', singer. Come up to the house. Isn't my house good enough for you? Come on, every one of you. You go ahead, 1827. I'll pull up the boats."

A cheerier place than Nick Moon's porch could not be found anywhere, and the view was enchanting.

The call to supper drew them away at last, reluctant though they were. But Nick's voice was commanding:

"You've seen sights like that lots of times, but you've never had the chicken and waffles Sally's got on the table now, and you'll never have 'em again. Come on! They're hot, and Sally don't like laggards."

Austin Sleighton sat beside Lucy Jickers, who began to talk at once.

"Do you know where Mr. Horton got that boat?"

"Had it sent down from the St. Lawrence, I believe."

"There, I knew he did!" she declared triumphantly. "I thought it looked like the boats up there."

"Why, have you been there, Miss Jickers?" Sleighton asked with interest.

"Of course. I spent a whole summer at Gananoque."

"May I ask when? What summer?"

"Why, surely." Lucy was at once surprised and amused at the young man's manner, it was so frankly and eagerly inquisitive. "Summer before last, July and August."

"You? That summer? You?" he exclaimed in excitement.

Lucy was really laughing now. "I?" she answered. "Yes, I. What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing wrong. But I didn't know, you know."

"Well, Mr. Sleighton, have you usually known where I spent my summers?"

"Ah, now, Miss Jickers, don't laugh. I'm only just naturally surprised. I thought I knew everybody in the sleepy old village that summer, but it seems I didn't. I didn't know you were there. I ought to have known it," he added with regret. "It would have been great to row you on the St. Lawrence. Oh, I love that river, Miss Jickers!"

"I don't wonder," she said gently. "It is a river to love. Was your home there? Tell me about it."

XXI

DRAMA DONE INTO REAL LIFE

AS the winter drew on it became more and more evident that Sleighton, the earnest theologian, untrained in social conventions, was developing rapidly into a new Sleighton of multiplying social accomplishment. His diffidence had been due largely to lack of social advantages in his early life, and his touch with Prestonbury society, especially through the medium of the Shakespeare Club, was giving him the opportunity he had never had.

In one direction, however, he was unable to overcome his diffidence. He had not yet called upon Miss Jickers. Longing to see more of her, he had not come to the point of accepting her invitation, when chance brought it about that he was cast for Malvolio in "Twelfth Night" and Lucy for Olivia, and the young lady proposed that he should come to her home some evening to rehearse the dialogue parts between them. Nothing could have pleased Sleighton better, and he named a night for the rehearsal with alacrity.

"What's up, A. S.?" inquired Horton when a few evenings later his friend appeared at supper with an extra curl to his black hair and a flaming red tie made in a bow with spreading ends. "What's the danger?"

"Danger? Who said anything about danger? What do you mean?"

"Nothing, only I saw you had your red flag out."

"That's no danger signal," he replied. "That's the flag of conquest. I'm going to see a girl."

"Who's the fortunate one, A. S.?" asked Horton as the table laughed. "Whither are you going?"

"Oh, you know! Shut up, can't you?"

"Haven't you been there yet? You're wasting your chances, A. S."

But the tormenting banter of his friends could not destroy Sleighton's pleasure in that evening. They read together, and Lucy asked all sorts of questions about the dialogue, and about how she should read this and that and the other of her lines, and then he had to read them for her, and they both laughed a great deal, and the evening was gone before he knew it.

"Now you've found your way here," said Lucy, as he was taking his departure, "you must be sure to come again. Don't wait till we're cast for leading parts together, for that may not happen soon."

Austin Sleighton went home as one who treads on air. The ice was broken. Thereafter he found no difficulty in calling upon Miss Jickers. He began by appearing at the Jickers mansion at intervals of two weeks, sometimes seeing Lucy alone, sometimes joined by her father and mother, and perhaps rather monopolized by the old doctor, who "loved to talk to students," as his daughter put it. By the time December was well under way his calls had become weekly occurrences, and his near friends were well aware of the attraction.

"Unless I am woefully deceived," said Mrs. Elmore to Bradford, "he is very much in love with her." Bradford scouted the idea, but events served to convince him of its correctness, though he was too busy at Mrs. Elmore's piano practicing for his holiday oratorio engagements to devote much of his spare time to Sleighton's affairs.

Stopping in at the drug store the day before his start

East for the first of his engagements, Bradford found Joe full of the subject. "Your honour," he began, "I don't know whether I'm for prosecution or defense, but I must say the do-re-mi man is progressing. If he should be charged with intentions on the liberties of a certain individual, you know, and with detaining said individual in the parlour of Dr. John Jickers for hours, you know, he couldn't prove an alibi."

"I don't much believe he'd try, J. J. I think he'd plead guilty."

"What? And not have a trial? I tell you there ought to be a trial. It's a case; it's a sure case, and I want to be counsel for the prosecution. No, sir! Don't let him plead guilty."

"Shall I tell him you favour a suit?" laughed Bradford. "His suit, for example?"

"No, your honour. Do-re-mi's progressing all right. He'll get there without your help or mine. It's a case, your honour—it surely is a case."

When the Shakespeare Club resumed its meetings after the holidays the play committee announced "Ingomar" for the last week in January, with Lucy Jickers as Parthenia and Sleighton as Ingomar. There was a little murmur of surprised merriment at the notice, for not even those who were most intimate with Lucy dreamed that she returned the evident and transparent interest of her admirer. But the surprise which the reading of the play brought the girl nearly betrayed her before them all.

The last of January came, and the evening reading began tamely enough. As the members of the cast warmed to their work, however, it was plain that Ingomar Sleighton was giving the most realistic rendering of his lines that had ever been heard by a Prestonbury

audience. "Would you think," some one whispered to Mrs. Elmore, "that so staid and matter-of-fact a man could read that just as if he were really dead in love with Parthenia?"

"Perhaps he is—with Parthenia Jickers," was the laughing response.

By and by came the lines about "two souls" and "two hearts," and Sleighton's love-lorn rendition of them at the climatic moment frightened Lucy a little, so fervent was it. At that precise moment, however, came an interruption in the person of Ansley Jickers, and under cover of the little stir of welcome to him Sleighton whispered swiftly, "Lucy, Lucy dear, let's have it that way always; you and I, you know, always. Shall we? Always, you and I?"

The crimson flooded her face, but a beautiful light shone in her eyes as she whispered back, "Yes, Austin; you and I, always."

The whispered exchange took but a moment, and the reading was resumed. But Ansley Jickers had seen the little colloquy and had read his sister's face. At the end of the play, when the company dispersed, he explained to Sleighton that he would be unable to accompany Lucy home, and asked him to take his place. "Lu, dear," he said, turning to her as she came up, "I've asked Mr. Sleighton to escort you home. I have an engagement."

The engagement seemed to take him in the same direction as Mrs. Elmore, for they left the house together. Ansley had learned to know his old playfellow better than ever in this past winter. His frequent visits to Bradford at her home had not ceased even when Bradford was absent or out of town.

Hand in hand the student and the maid went out

into the night. Orion, the old sword-girded god, marching around the world, saw two happy souls drink their first draught from the chalice whose edges are ruby lips, and whose contents are affection pure and sweet as incarnate innocence. But Orion went his way to the west and told no one.

Dr. Jickers was in his library reading. He heard steps, and raising his eyes saw Lucy and Austin Sleighton standing before him, still hand in hand.

"Bless my soul! What's all this? What's all this, Lucy?"

Sleighton replied: "Let me answer, Dr. Jickers. I love your daughter, and I want her for my bride."

"You do? Is your heart in that request, too, Lucy?"

"Yes, father."

The old man rose, drew the girl to him and kissed her; then, with warm hand-grasp to Sleighton, "God bless you, my son!" he said. "I'll go tell mother."

It was midnight when Austin Sleighton, closing the front door behind him, met Ansley Jickers coming up the walk. "The escort business seems to have been protracted, Mr. Sleighton," he said. "I am an interpreter as well as an attorney. Have you seen my father?"

"Yes. I should not have stayed so long otherwise."

"Ah, yes, I understand, I understand. Congratulations, Austin; hearty congratulations."

"Pardon me, Ansley," said the other as they shook hands. "But Mrs. Elmore has no father, has she?"

Ansley smiled. "I see you are an interpreter, too," he replied.

XXII

VARYING "SUMS OF DIRECTION"

"SO Lucy Jickers is going to marry that organist? Well, well! We knew, of course, she would marry a student, but why doesn't she take the singer? He's up there every week, and sometimes oftener, and Joe and the squire think there's no one quite so good as he is. Why didn't they make a match between him and Lucy?"

So Prestonbury talked, as wisely as people commonly do who talk about things of which they know nothing. Even the Shakespeare Club was surprised; not at Sleighton, for his infatuation had been one of the club jokes, but at Lucy. Only a few of the people who discussed the topic saw the real worth of the awkward student. Those few insisted that he was destined for success; as Jack Tappan put it, "Any fellow that can read life into the lines of a drama as he can will make his audience wake up if he has the poorest kind of sermon."

Bradford's congratulations were generous and glad. "That necktie won out, A. S.," he declared. "I was afraid it would be your ruin; it was almost as ridiculous as the horseback riding. But you've made it, and you're lucky, and so's she, as lucky as you are. You're the best fellow up here, old boy."

"Always barring you, Brad."

"Barring nothing and no one. Here's to you, Dr. and Mrs. Austin Sleighton of the by and by."

"Thanks, Brad. But don't forget it's all due to the 'Antigone.' By gracious, I wish you were as sure of the real 'Anti' as I am of Lucy."

Bradford winced, and relapsed into silence. It was only that morning that a letter had come to Mrs. Elmore from the travellers telling of their sojourn in Egypt. Though the young man asked no questions, it was natural that his hostess should share her news with him, but never till this particular day had she seen in him any sign of a more than passing interest in the facts she told him.

As she mentioned that a Scotchman named Stuart was with the Elmores and was very attentive to Eleanor, he had asked, as if involuntarily, "Is Miss Elmore likely to marry him?" She had seen him bite his lips in annoyance at his own words before she answered, "I imagine Father Elmore is very desirous of it."

In his room that night Bradford Horton took from his trunk an envelope in which were three withered white carnations, and held them for a while in the palm of his hand. In his face there was a far-away look, the look of longing that is sometimes worn when no one was with him to detect it. "Oh, well," he said at last, and put the faded keepsakes carefully away. He would never see her again, anyway; she was in Egypt, and when she should return he would be far away. For he did not know as yet the fortune that was even then on its way towards him. It was not until April that he learned of it. For in April the professor of Greek resigned, and the directors of the seminary elected Horton to the vacancy.

The announcement of Bradford's acceptance of the position, with leave of absence till November and an

advance of a part of his salary, was made at the annual meeting in May. Maxwell expressed his regret over the matter when he met Horton next day; he had still hoped to secure the young man as part of his permanent force at the bank.

"You and the directors have beaten me," he said. "I'm afraid you're turning a good banker into a dust heap. But I'm glad you're going to stay in Prestonbury, and remember, whenever you get weary of digging among Greek roots we're ready to put you to work in a gold mine."

Perhaps the only person not heartily glad at Bradford's good fortune was old Professor Dragham. That worthy man's soul was filled with fear. Was not the ark in danger once more, if a man who did not believe in "a call" was to become one of the instructors of young men preparing for the ministry? He shook his head and secretly mourned, but would probably have kept his misgivings to himself had not the dean given a dinner in Bradford's honour, at which the members of the faculty and their wives were guests.

Horton and Dragham were seated opposite each other at table, and at the first opportunity the voice of Professor Dragham rose, high, rasping, incisive. "Are you still testing the 'sum of direction,' Mr. Horton? Are you settled as to whether you have a call to the ministry?"

"I must answer no and yes to those questions, professor. I am not testing the 'sum of direction,' and I am settled as to my call."

"Then you think you are called to preach the Gospel?"

"No, no, I don't think that. But I know I am called to teach Greek."

"Do you consider teaching Greek a higher calling than preaching the Gospel?"

"No. With me it is not a question of higher or lower, but of simple fact. My friend, Mr. Sleighton, would say without a moment's hesitation that he is called to preach, and I would agree with him. Equally I say I am called to teach, and he will agree with me. But neither his call nor mine is the higher."

"I should like to know what makes you speak with such certainty about Mr. Sleighton."

"'Sum of direction,' professor. Through his seminary life he has been sought by those who wanted a good leader for meetings of various kinds. His preaching in Minnesota during his second summer vacation was so acceptable that it has secured him a call to an important Presbyterian church in St. Paul, and he has accepted it."

"Yes, I know. There is no question in my mind about Mr. Sleighton."

"But there is about me, professor?"

"Well——"

What Professor Dragham's answer might have been must be surmised. The wife of the dean heard the conversation, and she took the direction of the matter summarily.

"Pardon me, Professor Dragham," she said; "after dinner you and Professor Horton can go to the library and talk out your differences; can talk till midnight if you desire. But just now there are others of us who want to talk with you. We do not often have an opportunity, and I can't allow Professor Horton to monopolize you any more. Are you going to Canada as usual this summer?"

So the conversation drifted away from serious sub-

jects and the discussion was never finished. Before Bradford assumed his duties as a member of the faculty the senior professor had made his last fight.

In the starlight on the evening following the dinner Sleighton and Horton had their last pull together on Orsina Lake of happy memories. Horton was to leave for Glencoe on the early morning train. Standing before the gate of the Jickers house, both men realized with emotion that their three years together as fellow students were forever past.

"Come in with me, Brad."

"No, I won't go in, A. S. It's too late. I'll say good-bye here." There was a quiver of affection in the strong voice. "We met by the St. James with a handshake; we'll part with one here. Give Lucy my love. Stay single till I come back in November and I'll see you at the wedding. Good-bye, old boy."

The welcome of the Glencoe home was warm and loving. Barney O'Toole was still in the town, a permanent resident now, acting as teller of the reorganized bank. Coming to supper one night during Bradford's visit, he sat with him on the porch till a late hour talking over Prestonbury experiences, especially the early part of their acquaintance.

"Barney," said Bradford frankly, at last, "what made you hate me so when I first landed there?"

"Don't know. Your good looks and good manners, probably, and a feeling I had that you were finer-grained than I—that you were by nature the kind of thing I was pretending to be."

"Queer. Do you remember where you saw me first?"

"Yes; you came to the drug store and bought a lamp. I told 1827 after you'd gone out that you were a Nancy

boy. And I saw you fall and break that non-breakable bit of junk that Jickers put off on you. Then next day you took the indexing job for twenty-five dollars, and Maxwell must have thought I was a robber. I think I began then really to hate you. So it went. You sang me out of the choir job at the 'Old Furnace,' and then I had it in for you. I'm glad the luck was on your side, Horton."

"It came near not being. If I'd attended Miss Elmore's party I'd likely be serving my term now."

"Well, I don't need to tell you, Horton, I'm glad I failed. I never would have known the sort of man you are if I had succeeded. But honestly, Horton, I don't understand why you've treated me as you have."

"It's because I understand you, Barney."

"Do you happen to know where Mr. Elmore is now?"

"Yes; in Italy," said Bradford, in some surprise at the abrupt change of subject.

"Do you hear from him?"

"No. Mr. Elmore has no special use for me; why, I don't know. He turned from a friend into a foe almost in a night. There's a mystery there I cannot understand."

"I wish he could know in some way that I'm making good."

There should be no difficulty about that, Bradford assured him. Mr. Elmore should know all about Barney's altered career as soon as he returned to Prestonbury in the late fall. Then the talk drifted off to the latest Prestonbury news—the announcement just made public of the engagement of Ansley Jickers and Mrs. Elmore.

"The town is delighted," said Bradford. "They're to be married as soon as her family come home in No-

vember. Matrimony seems to be epidemic. I suppose Joe will be the next victim."

"Where do you come in?" asked Barney cheerfully.

"I?" Bradford laughed with a certain grimness. "I don't come in anywhere, O'Toole."

XXIII

MEETINGS FAR AFIELD

ON a morning in June two men alighted from the little steamer that daily makes the round of Lake Lucerne. Though not companions, both had come with the same purpose—to ascend on foot the Rigi-Culm. One of them loitered at the landing, watching the steamer as it puffed itself towards Fluellen, and then, strolling leisurely through the village, chatted with those he met. A half hour passed before he began to go up the mountain, and even then his step was not quick, but long and steady, as of one who knew what he had to do and how to do it.

The other man, having paused only long enough to inquire for the road up the mountain, started with quick, springy, nervous gait. He swung a walking stick with vigour, and occasionally struck off the head of a flower by the wayside. Before he had gone far, however, he had more than once stopped beside the road to rest, and during one of these pauses was overtaken by the man who had lingered at the mountain's foot. The wayside loiterer rose.

"Going up the mountain?" he asked with American lack of ceremony, adding, as the pedestrian nodded, "Care for company?"

"That depends."

"What on? Are you afraid of me?"

"No. We're not afraid of Americans over here."

"What makes you think I'm an American?"

"Your first question, for one thing; your nervous-

ness, for another. And your hurry to climb the mountain, for a third. Weren't you on the steamer from Lucerne?"

"Yes. I was in a hurry. I was anxious to see the view."

"But the view will remain, whether you are in haste or leisurely."

"Of course. Views can't run away. But I had never seen it. Was there anything to stop for?"

"Yes, as I look at it. The people and shops are quaint and interesting, and in the village there's a spring of ice cold water worth the whole trip."

"Too bad," said the other regretfully. "I'm sorry I missed that."

"Did you never," asked the stranger, "hear the American proverb, 'More haste, less speed'?"

The other laughed. "It seems to me I have. What other Americanisms do you find about me?"

"One at least; the nervous way you struck off the flowers with your stick. I've noticed that Americans are usually great wasters of nervous energy."

"Are you Englishmen never nervous?"

"Oh, yes, we're nervous, but do not show it as you do. But turn about is fair play. Why do you call me English?"

"Because of your unconscious process of self-elimination. In describing me you have told what you think Englishmen are not. Besides, no foreigner but an Englishman can speak English as you do."

"That was well answered. I am English, and yet I am not. I am a Scotchman."

They shook hands, and chatting in such fashion went up the mountain, pausing now and again to look at the ever-widening view.

"I've taken this walk many times," said the Scotchman, "and each time I discovered new wonders. Is this your first sight of Switzerland?"

"Yes, and it is both revelation and inspiration."

They dined together on the mountain and afterwards climbed to the battlement above to look down on the vast panorama.

"Do you return to Lucerne to-night?" asked the Scotchman.

"No, I go northward. Shall sleep to-night near Lake Zug somewhere, and to-morrow start for Berlin, where work is waiting for me. Are you returning to Lucerne?"

"No, I go down by rail and to Vienna. But I would like to know with whom I have passed these enjoyable hours."

"So would I. My name is Horton—Bradford Horton of Prestonbury, New York." His card corroborated his words, and on the one he received in exchange he read, "Malcolm Stuart, Newcastle-on-Tyne."

"Oh ho!" he thought; "this is the man Mrs. Elmore told me about." As he slipped the card into his pocket he heard the Scotchman say, "This is strange. I am familiar with the name Prestonbury. I heard it on the other side of the globe. In Japan I met some charming people from Prestonbury. Elmore was their name. Do you happen to know them?"

"Yes, I know them, and I have heard of you. You met them again in Egypt, did you not?"

"Yes, yes. I met them in Egypt, and was with them in Rome. How you Americans seem to know everything!"

Horton laughed! "No, not quite everything. But we do keep our ears and eyes open as we move about."

At the railway station they exchanged good-byes. "Europe is not large," called back Stuart from the train as it began the descent. "Perhaps we may meet again, Mr. Horton."

* * * * * *

The train which had brought the Elmores from Italy was nearing Vienna when Mr. Elmore remarked casually to his daughter, "I had a letter from Stuart in Milan yesterday. He said he would reach Vienna to-day, so perhaps we'll see him to-night."

"Oh, dear!" A weary sigh followed the words. "I thought I was to have a really good time in Vienna. What nuisances men are!"

"Why, I'm a man, Lennie."

"Yes, but you're a daddy-man, and that's different." The faint smile with which she brightened the words faded as she went on. "Mr. Stuart has almost spoiled my whole trip. I'm sick of being always on guard."

"Why on guard, Lennie? Stuart is not dangerous."

"But he is, father. He's always trying to edge up towards a question I don't want him to ask."

"If he ever does ask it, what will you answer, dear?"

"Father! Do you want me to marry Malcolm Stuart?"

"Not if your heart is not in it, dear."

"Well, my heart is not in it, father, not the least bit."

"Is it—is your heart in it—anywhere, Lennie?" His hesitation as he asked the question showed that he knew it was incautious. The girl flushed; for a moment her eyes blazed with anger. Then, with an effort, she controlled herself; the memory of Shanghai was still clear.

"I told you once," she said quietly, "how I would regard your wishes in that matter."

"All right, dear. I'm satisfied," he hastened to assure her.

"But, father!" she resumed after a little silence. "We're going to Berlin, and you know Caroline wrote Mr.—Mr. Horton had gone there to study. You'll surely run across him, or I will, or we will. And it's not that I care anything about him, but I hate to have things unpleasant, and to have you get angry."

"All right, dear. I'll trust you. I have your word, and that's enough."

"Then if we do meet, and he calls, you'll be good? And I may receive him?"

"I suppose so. As professor in the seminary, he's entitled to respect. Of course," he added hurriedly, "that doesn't change things really, but ——" He left the sentence unfinished.

It had not been without an effort that Mr. Elmore had brought himself to the point of saying what he had known it was necessary to say if he was not to display an entire lack of trust in his daughter and make himself appear in her eyes utterly unreasonable. When they had heard in Venice of Caroline's engagement and of Bradford Horton's election to the chair of Greek, he had been inclined to be angry, though only his wife knew it.

His tirade against the "impostor" had met with only remonstrance, not sympathy, from her, which had not lessened his disturbance at the fact that Bradford was to remain permanently in Prestonbury. The outcome was made all the more distasteful to him by the fact that the man he thought an upstart was now raised to his own social level. Over and over Mr. Elmore declared that had he been at home he would have prevented the election; over and over he vowed that

though he could not ignore the new professor he would never receive him in his house. Thus only by days of struggle had the proud old gentleman come to the resolve to treat Bradford Horton, whoever he might be, as one gentleman treats another, at least until he should see some sign that Eleanor's affections were involved. "Because he fascinates me is no reason why I should suppose he fascinates her," he told himself again and again.

The little colloquy in the train cleared the air for both father and daughter. In her meeting with Stuart that evening it was a case of "forewarned is forearmed." Welcoming him without constraint and with apparent pleasure, she yet made him feel a nameless something that said plainer than speech, "Comradeship will be acceptable, but love-making intolerable." Chafe in spirit though he might, he did not try to pass that barrier. "Finesse is better than force," he reflected wisely. So he set himself only to be gentle, steady, patient, thoughtful, constant, delightful, so delightful that Eleanor felt a growing regret that he was not a friend instead of a lover.

So, still in his company, Vienna became Dresden, and Dresden Geneva, and Geneva Interlaken, and all the rest; and so matters fared on until the Berlin papers that chronicle the movements of American tourists announced the arrival of the Elmore party. As soon as possible after reading the notice Bradford Horton called at the Kaiserhof, to find there not only his Prestonbury friends but, to his great surprise, his friend of the Rigi. His greeting to Stuart was an equal surprise to the Elmores, who had been on the point of introducing the two young men.

"Europe is so small that we have met again," Horton

said. "Your suggestion as we parted seems to have proved a prophecy." Turning to Mr. Elmore, he explained, "Mr. Stuart and I climbed the Rigi together one day in June."

Stuart was hardly overjoyed at the appearance of this new acquaintance. It was his last night in Berlin, and Eleanor had promised to walk with him in the park. During that walk he had determined to make her listen to his declaration. Now he was baffled once more, and must cover his chagrin as best he might.

The evening passed rapidly. Eleanor's relief at her deliverance from what she had been sure was coming made her sparkle with charming animation. Stuart joined as heartily as he could in the conversation which centred around things of which he knew little—incidents of the Prestonbury life from which Horton had recently come.

When Horton finally rose to go he spoke first to Stuart. "I have greatly enjoyed meeting you again, friend of the Rigi," he said. "I hope this meeting will not be like that, a meeting that ends in parting, with no certainty of meeting again. I am here in Berlin for several weeks and shall hope to know you better."

"I should be pleased also," said the Scotchman a little stiffly. "But unfortunately this is only another Rigi episode. I leave for England early in the morning."

So Bradford departed without a thought that his coming had wrecked a carefully formed plan, thinking only that Stuart was a luckier fellow than himself. And the luckier fellow bowed at last without a word to the inevitable, and with his good-byes to the Elmores said good-bye to his hopes.

XXIV

BITTER WORDS AND SWEET

NOT the movement of a muscle, not the inflection of a word, had shown during that evening the working of Mr. Elmore's mind. He had held himself in leash as the hunter holds his straining hounds. He had seen a surge of colour sweep over Eleanor's face as Horton entered the drawing-room of the Kaiserhof; he had seen how utterly devoid of emotion was her parting with Malcolm Stuart. In spite of himself, no matter how he held his feelings checked, young Drum's bearing, more graceful and distinguished than ever, fascinated and angered him as it did at every contact between them.

Reason tried to persuade him that there was nothing to fear. "Eleanor does not care for him," he argued with himself. "She said she would not marry him even if he should ask her. And, anyway, what sign does he show that he means to ask her?" But rational argument seemed to have no calming effect upon the unrest that this man's presence excited in him.

There was a still more immediate reason why the events of the evening had put Mr. Elmore out of temper. In spite of his last talk with Eleanor on the subject, before their stay in Vienna, he had hoped that she and Stuart might reach an understanding, and so cordial had they seemed of late that he had almost become persuaded that matters were as he wished. He was annoyed, therefore, when Horton's appearance

kept Stuart from his rights on that last evening, and disappointed when he saw from his daughter's cool manner to the young Scotchman that there was nothing between them after all. Too excited to let the night pass without a discussion of the matter with his wife, he broached a sudden question, pacing the floor of their apartment.

"Emily, are Lennie and Malcolm Stuart engaged?"

"I think not, dear. She would have told us."

"Well, why aren't they engaged? They ought to be. No man was ever more attentive to a girl."

"Probably," said the lady demurely, "for the same reason that kept us so long from being engaged. You never asked me."

"Does she love him?"

"Not the least bit, Richard."

"Well, why doesn't she love him?"

"Why didn't you love any one of half a dozen girls in Prestonbury, rather than me?"

"Why, because I couldn't."

"That's Eleanor's reason. You would have seen it all along, as I have, if you hadn't been blind."

"I know she told me practically that some time ago, but I thought lately she'd changed."

"She'll never change, Richard."

"Does she love this—this—this Drum man?"

"There's no reason to think so—she hardly knows him. What does make you insist so on that? But," she went on thoughtfully, "it wouldn't be surprising if a girl did fall in love with him. How handsome he was to-night! Why, Richard, he's perfectly fascinating."

"Don't you suppose I know that? That's what makes me insist, as you call it."

"Do you know," said his wife, "sometimes when I see how charming he is, and what a perfect gentleman, I think there's a fearful mistake somewhere."

"Don't you get crazy, too, Emily," said Mr. Elmore shortly. "Anyway," with an effort to reassure himself, "I have her promise not to marry him till I say she may, and I'll never say that. Never!"

"Suppose you should find there was a mistake, Richard?"

"But I won't! Don't I know? Didn't Rosalie Horton's letter just tally with the story of that old vagabond?"

"My dear, did it ever occur to you that perhaps you're putting into Lennie's head an idea she never would have thought of herself? It's fairly sure to make a girl fall in love to tell her not to."

"Nonsense! Lennie's no fool, and she has a mind of her own. Anyway, I'll keep her from seeing him any more. We'll leave Berlin to-morrow."

"But, my dear," said Mrs. Elmore in consternation, "we've only just reached here. It will look very ——"

"I don't care. St. Petersburg is more worth seeing than Berlin, and I've got my letters to the commandant there."

"But, Richard ——"

"Don't talk," he silenced her roughly. "We leave here to-morrow. I say so."

Accordingly, a change of plans was announced to Eleanor next morning, and two nights following, when Horton called again, he learned that the Elmores had left unexpectedly for St. Petersburg.

Eleanor accepted the situation pleasantly enough, though there were many things for which she would have liked to linger in Berlin. She knew well enough

the reason of their sudden departure; she understood why her father had fled from Berlin, where he as much as she desired to stay, to St. Petersburg, which had been outside their itinerary and about which neither of them cared especially. She could not quite refrain from all mention of a fact so obvious.

"You ran away from Berlin, daddy," she said one day after they were settled in the Russian capital, "because you were afraid of Mr. Horton. Do you doubt me after all?"

"No, dear," said Mr. Elmore uneasily. There was something about his daughter's steady gaze and even self-control that he had begun to find disconcerting of late. "But I want to save you from annoyance."

"Don't trouble, father. Mr. Horton will never annoy me," she said gravely. "And please don't annoy me yourself by showing that he annoys you."

"But he does, Eleanor, in spite of all. I saw how glad he was to see you, and I know what the looks and acts of young men mean. Besides, his most inopportune call sent Mr. Stuart away in a manner highly unsatisfactory to me."

"But highly satisfactory to me, father, and I think I am the one to be most considered in that connection. I was saved from a most unpleasant scene. I do not care at all for Mr. Stuart, except as a pleasant addition to our holiday, and I am thankful enough that at last he is only a memory."

"Oh, well," sighed her father, "girls are queer." It was his last allusion to the suit of Malcolm Stuart.

If Mr. Elmore thought that by his swift move he had escaped the dangers he feared from the proximity of Bradford Horton he was doomed to disappointment. The first person he encountered on the steamer when

his party embarked at Liverpool for home was the man he so feared. His old feeling of dislike for an impostor, of resentment at being first hoodwinked and later mortified, mastered him in a moment, and Eleanor, seeing it, feared troublous times in the journey across the Atlantic.

The first days of the passage were rough, however, and it was not until Sunday, the fourth day out, that Bradford came into contact with Mr. Elmore, when he found him on deck in a sheltered spot, lying in a steamer chair and looking very ill. He stopped with a courteous inquiry after the older man's health and then, mindful of his promise to Barney, added, "I have news that may interest you about a former employee of the bank. I forgot to speak of it that night in Berlin when we had so much to talk of."

"About Hobbs?" inquired Mr. Elmore stiffly.

"No. About Barney O'Toole, or Oren-Toole, as he once called himself."

"Once? Was not that his name?"

"No, sir. His name is Barney O'Toole. He has abandoned the other name."

"Where did you learn this?"

"I worked with him for some weeks a year ago."

"Where?" The information surprised Mr. Elmore greatly.

"In Glencoe, my old home. The bank my father, my adopted father, founded was wrecked by a defaulting cashier. It ruined our family. I was called home to help untangle the snarl."

"Did Oren-Toole work with you in that enterprise?"

"Yes. The bank examiner needed aid and I recommended O'Toole."

"I thought you and he were enemies."

"I was never his enemy. Why he was mine I did not know until recently. But the past is past. We are the best of friends now."

"You said a moment or two ago your adopted father founded that bank. Was that Henry Horton?"

The tone of the question was hostile, but Bradford answered it calmly in the affirmative.

"You once gave me to understand," Mr. Elmore went on sternly, "that he was your father. Why do you now call him your adopted father?"

"Because he was. Until I was thirteen years old I did not know he was not my own father, and I never have called any one else so. When I told you my story three years ago I was doing what I had been taught to do."

"Mr. Horton, do you know who was your father?"

"Yes, sir."

There was a dangerous quiet in the tone, but unheeding, the other continued to press his inquisition.

"Was it the old man you so charitably buried?"

With a mighty effort at control Bradford assented, only to have his anger set in a blaze by the next inquiry.

"What was his name, Mr.—Mr.—ah ——"

"Pardon me, Mr. Elmore," said Bradford, his face very white. "Not even to you can I answer that. My father had his reasons for not wishing his name to be known in Prestonbury. The time may come when I will reveal his secret, but that time has not arrived."

"So you decline to answer me?" Mr. Elmore laughed scornfully. "I can hardly wonder. Not even education can wholly lift a man above his origin. I am sorry this talk should have so aroused your anger, but there was really no reason why you should have

spoken to me. There is no reason why you should continue to speak."

"I beg your pardon," the young man replied with dignity. "There was a reason. I stopped to tell you, as Barney O'Toole asked me to do, that he has become cashier of the reorganized bank and is very highly respected in Glencoe. That is all, Mr. Elmore. I will trouble you no more. I hope you will soon be on your feet again. Good-day."

And calm outwardly, but a seething furnace within, he turned to walk along the deck.

"Will this man never be fair to me?" he raged. "I might have known that apology sprang from no change of attitude to me but only from his own selfish desires for the good of the bank. But why should he hate me? There's some hidden cause. I could have told him my father's name, but what good would that have done? I would only have been untrue to my father and gained nothing by it."

For the remainder of the voyage he made no further effort to speak with any of the Elmore party, but the afternoon before they landed he met Eleanor alone on deck, and she accosted him with animation and pleasure in face and voice.

"To-night will be our last upon the ocean," she began. "The captain is arranging for a volunteer concert. Will you sing?"

"Why, surely, if it will give you pleasure."

"How absurd you are! As if there were any question about that. I'll tell the captain. What will you sing?"

"Oh, I have a new song I picked up in London—new music to 'Break, break, break.' I call it fine. Will you play the accompaniment for me?"

"If I can see it first."

"I'll go get the song," he said. When he returned with the music she was sitting at the piano.

"Do you know," she said, "I've only heard you sing three or four times."

"Well, we will make it a fifth, if you'll run that accompaniment over."

"I don't need to run it over. I can follow you."

He began to sing, but half-way through the second verse she stopped. "I am like Mr. Sleighton that Sunday at Second Church," she said in reply to his look of inquiry. "How queerly things come about," she added. "I can't realize that Lucy is to marry him. I used to think he was one of life's impossibles."

Horton laughed. "Sleighton's a fine man," he answered, "a very fine man. He'll be heard from some day. However, this is not rehearsing. I must sing the whole song for my own satisfaction."

It was before the third verse, however, that there came an interruption of his own making. "By the way," he said, "speaking of the wedding, did you know I was to be a performer?"

"I supposed you would act as best man. I am to be maid of honour, so Lucy wrote last summer."

"For me that is a day to look forward to." Before the look in his face she dropped her eyes, and they turned back to the music. They were just finishing the last verse when her father appeared at the door of the saloon, drawn by the sound, but unaware of the performers. Angry in an instant, he crossed directly to the piano.

"Pardon me for the interruption," he said, "but I wish to see Miss Elmore."

Eleanor rose. "I think there will be no difficulty about the accompaniment. Father, Mr. Horton has a lovely song for to-night, and I'm to play his accompaniment. Good-bye, Mr. Horton."

And Bradford Horton understood both the father and the girl.

The concert was a success, as ocean steamer concerts always are. There was generous applause, and encores were abundant, but the surprise of the evening came when Mr. Horton sang. "Who is he?" was the question many times repeated. "Is he a new tenor going to the States for the opera season?" He could not refuse to give a second number.

"Miss Elmore, can you play without the notes the old 'Nearer, My God, to Thee'—old 'Bethany'?"

"Yes."

"Then please strike the chord and follow me."

When he had finished not a hand moved; a thrilling silence was the eloquent applause. The singer led his accompanist to her seat beside her mother, then very quietly left the saloon. His departure was a signal for an outburst of applause. He did not return, however, till the captain went in pursuit of him and brought him back. Again, during his self-accompanied rendering of the "Three Fishers," the audience sat spellbound, while the delight of the congratulations he received at the close carried him back in memory to a night when a single white carnation had dropped from an opera box to the floor at his feet.

Making his way through the throng, desirous only to escape into the darkness outside, he felt a bit of paper slipped into his hand. Looking to see who had done this, he observed Eleanor Elmore moving away with her father. When in his cabin he unfolded the crumpled

slip, he found in it simply the two words, "Thank you."

He looked for a moment at the conventional words, so unconventional in their coming to him. "I'm yours, Antigone," he said at last. "You'll never know it, probably, but I'm yours."

XXV

ILL WINDS NOT WITHOUT GOOD

ALL Prestonbury, it seemed, was astir with preparations for the double wedding in the Jickers family. "Who ever heard of a wedding on Thanksgiving Day? But it's just like those Jickerses. They can't do anything like anybody else. It's certainly Jickery enough, with Ansley for a groom and Lucy for a bride, and Joe for a best man, and the old doctor to give the bride away."

Such was the gossip of the day, very hearty and friendly gossip, for the family had a warm place in the heart of their town. Ansley Jickers, especially, was the people's pride, since his election in the first week of November to the post of state senator.

It was but a few days before the double wedding when the house on Sunset Hill threw open its doors and became again a centre of the city's social life. In these early days of her return every young man in the city, it seemed to her mother, called upon Eleanor, among them Bradford Horton, as conventionality required in view of their approaching association in the festivities. Lucy was to have no attendant but Eleanor, her closest friend, and Mrs. Elmore's maid of honour was to be Alice Lee.

The wedding came and went as weddings will, unmarred by any untoward event, and in the midst of glad good wishes from hosts of friends. Mr. Elmore, to be sure, frowned as he heard the hum of admiration

that passed about the church as his daughter came down the aisle, after the ceremony, on Bradford Horton's arm. Her beauty and his elegance of bearing seemed eminently fitted to each other. Perhaps it was the centring of all eyes on them that made it possible for Joe Jickers, as he and Alice passed down the aisle behind them, to say what he did to his companion.

"Your honour," he said suddenly in an undertone, half-way between altar and door, "counsel moves that the next malefactors to appear at yonder bar shall be Joseph Jickers and Alice Lee. What says your honour?"

Alice looked up, startled. "We've just appeared there, Joe. What's the use of appearing again?"

"Your honour, counsel would have these malefactors appear again as principals, not as accessories."

"How absurd you are, Joe!"

"Your honour, counsel is aware he can be absurd upon occasion, but he is not absurd now. Counsel has been hunting for an angel for years, and he thinks your honour's it. What does your honour think?"

Near-by people could hear Alice laugh, but she made no response.

"Your honour, is the laugh with no answer intended for a negative to counsel's motion?"

"No, counsel, no. Your motion is granted, and you're a dear old boy."

"Good," said the little man. "Will your honour name the day?"

They were at the door now. "Some time after the holidays, counsel," the girl answered. Then this stranger lover looked full into her eyes and she saw what she had never seen before—the soul of the man she had loved for many days.

In the vestibule Joe walked directly up to Eleanor Elmore. "Lennie," he said, "you needn't look for any more angels for me. I've found my own." Then he took the face of Alice Lee between his hands and kissed her.

* * * * * *

When Horton answered a knock at his new apartments one day early in December he found young Jack Tappan, announcing himself as a committee from the Shakespeare Club. "We shall feel highly honoured, Professor Horton," he said, "if you will accept election to membership now. We can't agree to read the Greek Testament, you know, but perhaps you'll be willing to forego that pleasure for an evening, occasionally."

The reasons that had kept Bradford from the club three years before no longer held. His career was assured, his position was established. There was nothing to deter him from satisfying his social instincts and gratifying his friends. So it was with acceptance of this invitation that he launched his boat on Prestonbury's social waters at the dock of the Shakespeare Club. He very soon proved that he could pull a good oar. If he enjoyed most of all in the evenings at the club his meeting with Miss Elmore no one ever suspected that he gave her a second thought. He was less transparent than Sleighton. Her father watched anxiously at first, but since Horton never called upon her at her home he soon relaxed his vigilance. With the most popular member of the seminary faculty he had no quarrel.

So the winter passed, and with pleasant anticipation the professor of Greek planned for an old-fashioned home-going at the end of the seminary year. All winter he had kept in warm and tender touch with

Glencoe, where Barney O'Toole lived now in the old home, giving great comfort by his attentions to Mrs. Horton. It was to Barney that he wrote when May had come at last, "The term will close to-morrow and I can finish my work in a week. Then, ho for Glencoe, and the river and the hills I love so well!"

But who can tell what a day will bring forth? Part of the work that must be done before leaving Prestonbury involved a call on Mr. Elmore, a call upon which much turned. His card admitted him, as three years before, to the banker's private office. Mr. Elmore's manner struck him as more reserved and repellent than it had been of late. The fact was that so unusual a call had awakened in Mr. Elmore's heart all the old fears that had lain sleeping through the winter. For this reason his language was courteous but cold.

"Have you had a good year's work, professor?" he began, perfunctorily.

"Very."

"Have you accomplished all you expected to?"

"Not all. I suppose no man with high ideals ever does."

"I hope you find your life as a citizen of Prestonbury enjoyable."

"All it lacks is the element of home. The other professors, with their ability to entertain, have me at a disadvantage. It is with reference to this that I have called."

Mr. Elmore hardened instantly. He was now entirely sure that the moment so long feared had come. "If you wish to consult me about buying a house," he said icily, "I think I can serve you best by referring you to a real estate dealer."

"The matter of a house does not interest me partic-

ularly, Mr. Elmore. My interest is in the queen who shall rule the house. It is of her I would speak."

"I know nothing about queens, professor."

"It is of Miss Elmore I am speaking. I would see her as my wife in that leadership for which she is so superbly fitted. I am asking you for permission to win your daughter's hand, Mr. Elmore."

"You? You? How dare you?" Mr. Elmore fairly stammered in his wrath. "You give her a place as social leader? For that she needs no aid from you. Her social leadership was assured long ago. And you dare to ask me for her hand?"

"Yes, sir. Is that a crime? I will offer her a clean hand and a pure heart."

"No, sir. You will offer her nothing. Have you dared to speak with her?"

"If I had, I should not have asked you if I might."

"No, you would not. She would have sent you where I send you now, to find some one of your class or standing, or no standing."

Bradford Horton was very angry, but his love for the daughter was greater than his wrath at the father. With admirable self-control he answered:

"I can accept your refusal, but I will not brook your slurs. I will not seek Miss Elmore's hand, though I feel sure she would have accepted my offer had I made it without coming to you. I recognize your present right, but I demand an explanation of your words."

Mr. Elmore, exasperated by Horton's self-possession, answered with vehement scorn:

"A clean hand, you say; a pure heart! Why did you not complete the sentence—'and no name'? Why do you masquerade under a name not your own? Drum—William Drum—is your name if you have a

name. You dare to propose to join your nameless life to that of my daughter?"

He drew open the table drawer, took a letter from a bundle of papers and threw it down before Horton. "Read that, sir," he ordered.

It was Rosalie Horton's letter. Bradford read it and his face grew colourless. He read it again, and yet again. "There! I can repeat it now," he thought. "This precious thing is burned into the tissue of my brain." He flung it down upon the table.

"A lie as false as hell," he said in a shaking voice. "And yet it is true, in part." Then his anger blazed out. "And you," he cried, "you, who call yourself so fine a gentleman, you have kept that letter for more than three years and never so much as asked me for an explanation. This, then, is the secret of your change towards me before my second arrest. This is why you still believe the 'Drum' story, which no one else believes, and which was absolutely false. This was the secret of your rude repulse of me on shipboard. This is the secret of the present insult. Why did you not ask me to explain? Why did you not give me even what any criminal has, a chance for self-defense? There lies your letter," with an eloquent gesture. "Keep it! Cherish it! Read it, reread it! Think how noble you were, proclaiming through a whole city that a friendless young man was an impostor, unworthy of confidence. The day will come when it will sting you to remember what that letter has made you do to-night. Good-night, sir." And before Mr. Elmore could reply he was gone.

With some misgivings that gentleman replaced the letter in the file. "'False as hell, yet true,'" he repeated. "What did he mean? What did he mean?

He was never so fascinating, even in his anger. Who is he? What is he?"

* * * * * *

A knock at the door of Jake's house on Long Point at seven o'clock next morning brought Jake himself to answer.

"Vell? Vhat you vant?" he asked gruffly.

"Breakfast. I've rowed from the foot of the lake. I'm Professor Horton of the seminary."

"Ya. I haf seen you in der pank alreaty. I haf seen you in der poat."

"Yes, I know. Can I get breakfast?"

"Ve keeps no poarting-house, yet."

"Ya, ve do," a woman's voice broke in. "Ve gif him der preakfast, Jake." It was Jake's sister calling from the breakfast table. "Pring him in, Jake."

"You row up dis morning alreaty?"

"Yes."

"Vere is der poat?"

"Down on the point on the gravel."

Jake disappeared, leaving Bradford at the table with Gretchen.

"I'm looking for a place where I can spend the summer and be out of sight," he began. "I want to work where no one will disturb me. If I go over yonder to Kenton's I'll be bothered all the time; there's too much noise and too much whiskey over there. Can't I stay here?"

"Ve keeps no poarting-house, yet."

"I know. I don't want a boarding-house. I want to come here just because you don't keep a boarding-house. I'll eat what you put on the table and find no fault; I'll sleep in the barn if you haven't an extra

room; I'll pay ten dollars a week in advance and I'll stay till September. What do you say?"

The arguments were strong, and appealed to the thrifty mind of Gretchen. She showed signs of yielding. "Ve haf rooms, alreaty," she said. "I go talk mit Jake."

By the time Horton had finished his breakfast the brother and sister returned, the former carrying Horton's trunk on his sturdy shoulder. Matters were evidently to be taken for granted.

"I findt der trunk in der poat," began the German. "I make der poat in der parn. Gretchen say you shtay mit uns alreaty."

"I am to have a room in the house, then?" Bradford smiled faintly at the success of his persuasions, and added, as Jake nodded, "There's a box of books in the boat. I'll go for it."

"Nein, nein," the other remonstrated. "I pring dem, yet. Und ve vill pull der poat up in der proob, also," pointing to the deep, wide stream that flowed near the barn and offered excellent mooring.

Before midday the young man was installed in a comfortable room overlooking the lake. But there were no signs of pleasure in his face at the arrangements which suited him so perfectly. His mouth was stern and set, and at intervals his eyes flashed dangerously, as from time to time the storm which had raged all night in his heart swept over him afresh.

In the first bitterness of his anger the knowledge had come to him that Glencoe was an impossibility for him that summer, perhaps forever, and he had written his sister that a sudden change of plans would make it necessary to give up his visit to her. He had given no reasons; he had made no mention of his probable where-

abouts. It was his foster mother's malice that had been the cause of Mr. Elmore's injustice and he dared not trust himself to see her. He was far too deeply wounded to seek an explanation; that could never remove the sting of her unkindness, nor annul its effects. The original letter, written in anger, he might have forgiven; what seemed unforgivable was her silence the past two years, in view of all that he had done for her and of her reconciliation with him. "She might have taken it back; she might have told the rest of the truth," he said over and over during that night of misery.

Prestonbury, he realized, was as impossible for him just now as Glencoe. To see on its streets the man who had defamed him, the woman who was forever beyond his reach, was more than his strength could endure. Silence and solitude, he knew, would be his only remedy; and he turned in flight to the wooded shoes of the lake that he loved as a refuge alike from friends and enemies. The softness of the early morning air, the early twittering of the birds, the lapping of little waves against his bow as he rowed up the lake, all failed to soothe him.

"'Visiting the iniquities of the fathers,'" he quoted bitterly. "Where is the justice in that? Because God made me the son of my father, must He make me carry my father's curse as well?"

"Jake," he said to his host at dinner that first day, "promise me that when you go to town you won't tell any one I'm here." Then, as he saw a shade of suspicion cross the German's face, he added, "There's nothing wrong about it—I only want entire rest. Understand?"

"Ya," said Jake, with a searching look that appeared to satisfy him.

June passed into July, July into August, with its

sultry days and sudden storms. Days of determined, albeit mechanical, reading and study had disciplined his mind into calmness, though far beneath the surface the bitterness remained unsoothed. In daylight he avoided the lake; at night, after there was no longer likelihood of his being observed or recognized, he would row or drift, sometimes till midnight. The afternoons he spent under the shade of the sycamores that lined the shore of the point.

On such an afternoon, hot, humid and oppressive in spite of a breeze from the north, he lay there watching the clouds and dreaming day-dreams, through all of which moved ever the figure of a lovely girl with bronze hair and lustrous eyes. Suddenly, half-way across the lake, a sailboat came in sight, and surprise and curiosity brought the observer to an upright posture.

"That fellow can't know much about flaws and cross-currents from the ravines," he thought. "If he does, he's either a good sailor or a lunatic, for there's a storm over the bluff yonder."

Presently he could make out two figures in the boat, a man and a woman. The wind was rising rapidly now, and the whitecaps began to chase each other over the lake. As he watched he once more made comment. "That man doesn't know how to sail a boat anywhere in a smooth sea, much less in this rough one."

The storm was coming on very swiftly. Clouds black, white-edged and thunderous rose fast. Fiercely and more fiercely blew the wind. "I'll get my boat," he said, and starting, stopped at the house to ask Gretchen to send Jake down to the point. As he pulled out of the brook he saw Jake hurrying down; rowing towards him, he yelled, "Be ready if I want you!"

"Ya," came the answer, but faintly, so loud was the

gale. The man with the sail was trying to get his craft before the wind, but it blew now from one quarter, now from another, and the cross-currents rocked and twisted the boat terribly. To furl the sail was impossible. Jake shouted directions, but it was useless; his voice was lost in the gale. Suddenly the bow lifted high, the boat twisted round, shivered and capsized. With a few strokes Horton was close to Jake. "Wade out and climb in, Jake. I can't get nearer shore."

The distance to the sailboat was not great, but it seemed to Bradford as if all eternity was passing, for he had recognized the occupants of the boat. Rather would he die than fail in the rescue. The craft was sheer over, and Charlie Elmore had succeeded in climbing up on its bottom, where he lay flat and was holding Eleanor by one arm. He was not strong enough to lift the unconscious woman out of the water to his place of comparative safety. The poor boy thought the end of all things earthly had come for his Aunt Eleanor.

"Hold hard, Charlie, hold hard!" called Horton as he neared him. "Jake, I'll pull alongside the lady and you reach her and draw her in while I hold the skiff steady. Be quick! Now! Now, Jake, now!"

The German was strong, but it took all his power to drag the dead weight from the tempestuous water, and there was imminent danger of a second capsizing. To take Charlie off was easier, though when once he saw his aunt and himself safe in the rescuing boat the lad collapsed weakly. He was able, however, to help Horton run the *Antigone* inshore in the shelter of the quiet brook, while big Jake, taking Eleanor in his arms like a baby, carried her, still unconscious, in to Gretchen. At the end of half an hour the girl was in bed, and

Gretchen, with such means as were at her command, was striving to restore her to consciousness, while Charlie, dressed in an outfit of Horton's, was quite himself again.

"Charlie," said Horton, "when Miss Elmore is conscious and you can see her, tell her that some one has gone to Prestonbury to tell her father she is safe, and a carriage will be here for her by midnight."

"Who'll you send, Mr. Horton?" asked the boy, with a glance at the lake, still rolling heavily.

"I'm going myself," he said, simply, unhesitatingly.

It was five o'clock when Horton started for his hard journey. The pull down the lake was with the wind, so that it was only seven when he reached Wilton's boat-house at the foot of the lake and hired a man to go with a message to Ansley Jickers. "Tell him," he ordered, "that a man sent you to report that Charles Elmore and a lady were caught in a storm on the lake this afternoon, nearly drowned and rescued by Jake. They are at his house now."

The lake was quieter on Bradford's return trip, but the pull against the wind was hard, and it was 11 : 30 when he moored his sturdy craft in Jake's inlet. His first inquiry was for Eleanor.

"How's the young lady, Jake?" he asked of the German, whom he found in the barn.

"Badt—fery badt," was the reply, with a grave shake of the head.

"How bad? What do you mean?" cried Bradford, with a shiver of fear that shook him more than the hard physical trial of strength he had just passed through.

"I mean badt, fery badt," was the laconic answer. "You petter see Gretchen, yet."

Gretchen, called away from her patient, told but a brief story. "The fräulein wake. Den she ask vere she be alreaty. Ve tell her. She begin to vorry for her family's not knowing vere she be. Ve tell her you haf gone to make it right. Den she cry; she say, 'Oh, Sharlie, Sharlie, I haf killt him—he will trown, alreaty! Oh, Sharlie, Sharlie!' Till now," said Gretchen, "do as ve may, ve cannot get her quiet."

"Tell her that I am here all safe, Gretchen," said Bradford. "I did not mean her to know who it was had gone." To himself he could not help adding the exultant thought, even in his anxiety, "Does she care like that, then?"

In a moment more Charlie appeared. "Aunt Lennie wants to see you, Mr. Horton. You'll have to go up; it's the only way to quiet her."

Again Bradford did not hesitate. As he entered the room, dimly lighted, a smile crossed the drawn, tense face that lay so eagerly watching the door. "Oh, God, I thank Thee," Eleanor said weakly, and buried her face in the pillow.

Perplexed, uncertain, helpless, like every man in the presence of a woman's tears, Horton stood waiting beside the door. At last, raising her head she saw his troubled look, and quick to divine its cause reached out her hand to him. He crossed the room and took it in his own.

"Is it you, Bradford? Really you?" she asked faintly. "And you're not drowned?"

"Yes, it is I, Eleanor, really I; and I am not drowned." His words were only trembling repetitions of her own, but his heart bounded with fullness of joy.

"I've been so afraid—so afraid," she whispered, raising to his the lustrous eyes that he had seen in dreams

so long. Forgetful of all else he stooped and took her in his arms and kissed her, careless of Charlie's presence behind him.

"You need not be afraid any longer, dear heart," he said. In that moment while she clung to him they did not hear the opening door, but footsteps behind him made him turn to see in the doorway Ansley Jickers, smiling, and Richard Elmore, glowering and stern and pale as death.

Standing at the bedside, the clinging hand still in his own, Bradford faced the interruption. At sight of her father's face the girl's eyes dilated. "Oh, daddy, daddy!" she began.

"Hush! Not a word!" The anger in his voice frightened her. "Ansley, you take Charles home. I will stay till morning. Tell Mrs. Elmore to send up the carriage early. As for you," starting with fierce wrath towards Horton, "you reptile ——"

"Don't, daddy!"

He turned on her as fiercely. "Silence! Remember your promise to me!"

With a sob she turned her face away. Shanghai and her word of honour given there seemed to her to rise like an impassable barrier between her and the man whom the terror of the night had shown her she loved well.

"Mr. Elmore,"—the voice was that of Ansley Jickers —"this is one of the times, I think, when silence for all parties concerned is a safety-valve. Come along down, Charlie; I have dry clothes for you. And, Eleanor, I congratulate you on your rescue and your rescuer. Jake told us outside what Bradford did."

When the lawyer and his stepson had gone, there was dead silence in the room save for Eleanor's sobbing.

The two men faced each other, eyes meeting with sharp impact, neither speaking, neither flinching. At last the elder man walked to the door, opened it, stepped back and pointing to its threshold said with unutterable scorn, "Go!"

"Mr. Elmore," Bradford replied with calm, soft voice, "there lies your daughter. But for me she would be lying at the bottom of the lake. I perilled my life to save her. Here you stand. But for me you and Mrs. Elmore would be in awful suspense this livelong night, not knowing what had happened to your daughter. I perilled my life to carry to you the tidings of her safety. For this, your only word to me is one of scornful dismission. I will obey it.

"No—wait one moment," as the other started forward to break roughly his detaining clasp upon the hand in his. "I have not finished till I say that though your will may keep our lives, hers and mine, apart forevermore, you have no power to make her stop loving me, to make me stop loving her. Now, I will say good-night, and I shall never speak to you again."

He raised the hand he held to his lips, then gently relinquished it, with a calmness and assurance that by its force held Mr. Elmore back from interference. "Good-bye, Eleanor," he said. "Good-bye, dear. God will watch between us both."

Before Mr. Elmore recovered from his surprise at being so dominated by the will of another stronger than he the door had closed and left him alone with his daughter.

XXVI

"GONE—BUT NOT FOREVER"

PRESTONBURY knew the story of the wreck and rescue before noon next day. The *Evening Journal* paid a glowing tribute to Professor Horton. Boating parties stopped at Jake's the second afternoon to offer congratulations, but the hero was not there. To all Jake told the same story.

"It vas dis vay: Brofessor Horton pulled der fräulein from der vasser. Den he row avay down der lake. He sendt vordt to der old man, den he row pack. Ven der fater come, Mr. Horton, he go avay. No, I not expect he vill come pack. He take his poat und all his dings. He go; das ist alles."

Conjecture was wide and puzzled as to why Horton had vanished. It had suddenly dawned upon his friends, who had all this time supposed him at Glencoe and had wondered somewhat at not hearing from him, that he had spent the summer actually in hiding at Jake's. "What do you suppose he was doing up there, all alone?" one said to another, and Joe Jickers would reply, to veil what he thought he knew to be the true reason, "Giving himself new lessons in how to be different from anybody else. He probably got up that storm just to show what he could do."

But why he had disappeared just in the hour of such triumph not even Joe could explain, and Ansley and his stepson, who could have explained, kept their own counsel.

On the day when the seminary opened, however, Horton was in his place with his associates, and on the following Sunday he preached the first chapel sermon to an auditorium crowded with people from the town, who said as they left after the service, "He can preach almost as well as he can sing." Not even the presence of Eleanor Elmore, sitting at one side with her sister Caroline, could overturn his poise, though he flushed with pleasure at the sight of her.

To meet her socially, however, with matters at the point they stood between them he felt would be an impossibility for both. Honour would not allow him to ask from her an explanation of the "promise" to which he had heard her father make reference on the night of the storm, and he realized that she was not a woman either to break a promise or to volunteer an explanation, even to the man she loved, until it was asked for. With affairs at such a deadlock there was nothing to do but to perform steadily his seminary work until the achievement he had laid down for himself there should be accomplished, and to avoid every possible situation that would give Eleanor pain.

Accordingly, he resigned from the Shakespeare Club, and as the winter passed declined such invitations to social functions as he had accepted readily enough the year before. He had no heart even for the cozy fireside of Joe and Alice Jickers, who wondered disappointedly at his desertion of them. Joe, keen observer that he was, did not doubt that Mr. Elmore was in some way responsible for the transformation of his "new type" into a recluse, and he had more than a suspicion that Eleanor was in some way involved as he saw her lack of animation and her increasing quiet of manner. Gracious and lovely as ever, she seemed to have lost the

bubbling spirits that had been one of her charms. He said nothing, however, even to his wife.

There were no more of the frequent chats in Ansley's office that Bradford had come to enjoy in the preceding winters. The senator was much in Albany, and only once when he was at home did Horton call upon him. That was on the day after Samuel Maxwell's funeral; the cashier had died suddenly from heart failure, and Ansley had been called home.

"You haven't been to see me once this winter, Bradford," Ansley hailed him as he appeared in the office.

"No, I've been very much occupied."

"Oh, nonsense! You are no busier than you were a year ago. You're taking that Branscombe incident too much to heart, my boy. That will all clear up. Take a new tack. You'll make port by and by, with Eleanor on board, too."

"Don't, Ansley, please. I did not come about such things. There's a grave in my heart and the flowers are not blooming on it yet. I want to bring Barney back to Prestonbury and put him in Maxwell's place. If it had not been for me he would succeed now to the post naturally. I want him to have it all the same."

"What a man you are, Brad! Always thinking about some one else and never about yourself. I can put Barney in there, and I will, too, just for you."

Bradford rose. "Good, Ansley. That's all I came for. Good-bye."

When Barney O'Toole returned to Prestonbury people were greatly surprised—first, that the bank would have him; next, that he was called Barney O'Toole; and last, that he and Horton were the closest friends and companions. Yet the professor never stepped inside

the bank, even to see Barney. He kept his bank account now at the Orsina National. He met Mr. Elmore occasionally on the street, but never gave him the slightest sign of recognition, and to avoid meeting him on Sundays he gave up the choir and was away somewhere preaching almost every week.

In May he paid a second thousand dollars upon the mortgage against his mother's house.

"Half gone now, Ansley," he said as he laid down his check. "Two halves will make a whole. And I'll pay the other half. You'll not lose anything by what you did for me."

"I should not regret it if I did. When I once make up my mind to do a thing I accept all it brings. It's all part of the day's work, Brad. Are you going to Glencoe this summer?"

"No. I will be in Berlin in two weeks. I sail now in two days."

On the anniversary of the storm upon Orsina Lake Eleanor Elmore received a letter postmarked "Berlin." It was very brief, but it filled her heart with joy.

"DEAR ELEANOR:
"This is the anniversary.
"Lovingly,
"BRADFORD."

That was all. He gave no foreign address, but found, as he hoped he might, when he had returned to his post in September a letter which read,

"DEAR BRADFORD:
"I have not forgotten.
"Lovingly,
"ELEANOR."

So passed another year and then another. Bradford Horton, the boy who stood before the clock tower with a half-dollar in his hand, had become a man, stern, strong, silent.

At the end of the second year he sat one morning in the office of Senator Jickers, waiting the lawyer's coming. When he arrived Bradford went directly to the matter he had in hand.

"I've come to pay up that mortgage, Ansley." He handed the lawyer his check for principal and interest. "Get the paper for me, will you?" he added.

Ansley produced the mortgage. Horton looked at it a moment, turning it over nervously, while his friend watched him in troubled silence.

"Send the satisfaction piece to my mother in Glencoe, will you, Ansley?" he said, breaking the pause at last.

"You prefer to have me send it?"

"If you will." He rose. "Good-bye, Ansley. You've been a good friend to me. Good-bye." And before the astonished lawyer could make reply he was gone.

"Caroline," Ansley Jickers said to his wife that night, "I don't know what to make of Bradford Horton. He has changed entirely. He acts like a living dead man. He's got some course mapped out, I don't know what, and I didn't dare ask him a question this morning, well as I've known him. It seems as if something must have happened to quench the fire of every sentiment in his soul."

"Don't you know what? You were at Jake's that night, and I should think you would."

"Oh, in a general way. But I never knew what led up to that situation, nor what happened after Charlie

and I went down-stairs. Even a lawyer can't ask questions about such things."

"Well, Eleanor told me without my asking questions. Poor child, she had to tell somebody. It seems she and father had a quarrel in Shanghai, all because father became possessed of the idea that she was infatuated with Bradford and that he was in love with her. It was the excitement then that brought on that long illness of father's. I don't suppose she realized herself, then, that she cared anything about Bradford, but she didn't like injustice and she took his part, and the upshot of it was, she promised father, to quiet him, I suppose, that she'd never marry Bradford or anybody else against his will. You know how she regards a promise, and you know how proud he is, so there you have it."

"But your father had been well disposed enough, I thought, to Bradford all that first winter after they came home."

"I know. But Lennie says he came to their house just after the seminary closed that summer and was closeted with father for an hour, and that was just before he went away. Nobody heard any more of him till the night of the storm, you know. Now, my theory is that he asked permission that night to ask Lennie to marry him, and Father Elmore refused, and their next meeting was at Jake's, and you know what that was."

"You've got quite a head, Caroline! Did she happen to say what more happened that night that I didn't see?"

"Yes. Father ordered Bradford to clear out, to put it briefly, and Bradford faced it out and told him he'd never speak to him again. He hasn't—hasn't spoken or recognized father in any way. Father'll never come

round, I'm afraid, and Eleanor feels she's tied by her promise, and she's afraid to mention the subject to him for fear of bringing on another stroke. She says Bradford will never lay himself open to another such scene. She doesn't blame him—I think she rather loves him better for his honourableness—but she's breaking her heart, and that nearly breaks mine." The tears were in her eyes as she finished.

Ansley had grown graver and graver. "I wonder what set Elmore so against the fellow, anyway," he reflected aloud. "He lived down the Drum episode long ago, and I never knew your father to be so prejudiced and narrow in anything before. Bradford's proved long ago what his character was, father or no father."

Caroline hesitated. "Eleanor swore me to secrecy on one point I haven't told you, Ansley. I'm afraid you'll let it get back to Father Elmore if I tell you, and that would grieve her so."

"Don't you know me yet, Mrs. Ansley Jickers? Don't you know I'm wise and wary and have a deep well to keep secrets in?"

"Well, then, drop this into it. Lennie says that just at the time of the Drum business her father had a spiteful, malicious letter from Bradford's adopted mother—the one in Glencoe he's done everything for since then—saying that he was a nameless child left on her door-step and brought up by her husband, and that he'd always been wicked and ungrateful. Father was influenced by that, of course."

Ansley whistled long and expressively. "So that's the rest of the matter! Well, it's a pity Brad has taken himself off. I happen to know that he could set himself perfectly right on that score, if he only would.

Even if he were here, though," he added, "he's so quixotic that I don't believe he'd do it, even if Mr. Elmore faced him with the letter itself."

"What do you know, Ansley?"

"Can't tell you, dear. Lawyer's confessional secrets, you know—can't tell you." And not another word could she persuade him to say on the subject. Into his mind, however, had flashed at once the recollection of the letter given him years before by Mrs. Horton. "I wonder," he thought, "if that wouldn't set everything right."

Yet he could not bring himself, in honour, to break the embargo laid upon the delivery of the inclosure to Mr. Elmore without the permission of the writer. Next day he wrote for that permission, but before an answer to his letter was received Bradford's purpose was too clear. He had placed his resignation as professor in the hands of the directors, had refused all requests to reconsider his decision and before the week was ended had left the city, leaving no word as to his destination.

He had, however, left one matter of personal interest in the hands of Barney O'Toole. Eleanor Elmore was taken by surprise when one day the cashier called upon her. "I have a letter for you, Miss Elmore," he began, "which Mr. Horton left with me, asking me to give it to you in person after he had been away a week. That is why I have ventured to call."

She took the letter and thanked him. "Will it embarrass you if I ask where Professor Horton has gone?" she asked hesitatingly.

"No, but I can't answer the question. I only wish I did know where he's gone. He's the best friend ever I had, Miss Elmore."

Eleanor made no comment on the little confidence; her interest in her own matters was too great.

"Do you think Mr. Sleighton knows?" she asked.

"He may, but I think not. He took all his money in gold; when I offered him a draft he said a draft would mean identification, which shows he doesn't mean to have any one know where he is."

Barney did not prolong his call, but as he left his abstracted hostess she added to her good-night, "Come again, Mr. O'Toole. You're Mr. Horton's friend, and I shall always be glad to see you."

Left alone, Eleanor took the precious letter away to her own room. Its pages were full of affection; in them he told the story of his long love for her, told how it began before the gate on Sunset Hill, the day of his first sight of her. He told, too, why he felt that he must go away from her.

"Do not try to find where I have gone," he wrote. "God has called me to a work which I can do. I must do it." He left her as a parting gift his boat-house and the land it stood on, and the boat in which he had saved her life. "Its name," he added, "is that by which in my mind I have always called you." She smiled through the tears that had gathered, then went on to the ending of the letter. "We shall meet again, my dearest," it read. "I don't know how nor where, but God knows, and our betrothal in Jake's cottage God will sanction and smile on by and by."

Twilight faded into darkness as she sat still at the window. The full moon flooded with light the western hills towards which her room looked out and touched the fleecy clouds with silver.

"Gone," she said, over and over. "Gone! But not forever—oh, not forever! God, let it not be forever.

He has loved me too long, too patiently, too truly. And, oh, Bradford, I love you so! I cannot tell you so, dear, but, oh, I do, I do indeed!"

She dropped her head upon her arms on the window sill; the light touched the gold lights in her bronze hair. "He says that we shall meet again," she sobbed. "But when? Oh, Bradford, when?"

Calmer after a little, she went to her writing desk and drew out three letters. One was the note of thanks for the carnations; two were identical, the annual reminders of the storm and their betrothal. With them she placed this last. "He loves me. I will wait until he comes," she said.

XXVII

REVELATION AND REMORSE

THE answer to Ansley Jickers's letter to Glencoe came in far different shape from what he had anticipated, and only after an interval of ten days. Previous to receiving it, he spent one evening with Mr. Elmore, with the deliberate intention of hearing from that gentleman's own lips the truth about his prejudice against Bradford. Whatever might develop after he should hear from Mrs. Horton, he did not wish it to become necessary to explain the information he had received from his wife, and she in turn from Eleanor, which would seem like a betrayal of confidence. So the lawyer proceeded to accomplish some of his clever detective work.

"They want me to run for governor this fall, Mr. Elmore," he began, as the two sat smoking on the Sunset Hill porch.

"So I've heard. Well, you ought to make it."

"You think so?"

"Most certainly. It would gratify me greatly. Does the prospect of a campaign worry you?"

"Not in the least. I'm not half as much worried over that as I am over this sudden resignation of Professor Horton."

Mr. Elmore's face hardened. "That is scarcely a thing to trouble about, or to wonder at. My wonder is that he did not resign three years ago."

"What was there to make him resign then?"

"Have you forgotten that night at the lake?"

"What, when he saved Eleanor's life and Charlie's? No, I haven't. I shouldn't think you ever would."

"Saved her life? Yes, and then because chance circumstances enabled him to save it he insulted her before my face. You're right about my not forgetting; it makes my blood boil now to think of it."

"Easy, easy, Mr. Elmore," urged Ansley in his smoothest manner, as he saw the older man's rising wrath. "I remember what happened, but I didn't see any insult. Oh, yes, I saw him kiss her. I don't wonder; she looked as beautiful as Helen of Troy. I'd have done it myself. By the way, are you sure Eleanor took it as an insult?"

"Ansley, we'd better not discuss this or I shall be angry. His action was utterly inexcusable, after what had passed between him and me."

"Oh, ho! So you and he had talked about Eleanor before, had you?"

"We had. He had the impudence to ask if he might offer himself to her."

"You call it impudence, do you, for a man very handsome, very well bred, very gifted, very popular, to want to marry your daughter?"

"I call it impudence. That is just what it was."

"Well, all I can say is you astonish me. So you told him no?"

"I most certainly did."

"But why, Mr. Elmore? You must have had some reason."

"Reason? I should say I had reason. Come into the office. I will show you my reason."

As his host led the way into the house Ansley smiled in satisfaction under cover of the darkness. This was exactly the move towards which he had been leading

the unsuspecting Mr. Elmore. Reaching the office, the latter drew from his file the long preserved letter of Rosalie Horton, and without a word handed it to Ansley.

The lawyer read and reread it, as innocently as if he had never heard of it before. "Well, well, well!" he said at last, with well assumed surprise. "Now at last I've got to the bottom of this business."

Mr. Elmore had been watching him closely. He had great regard for the opinion of this man. "What business?" he asked quickly. "What do you mean, Ansley?"

The lawyer paid no heed to the question, but asked another. "Of course you showed Mr. Horton this?" He had no belief that Mr. Elmore had ever ventured such a thing; consequently the answer surprised him.

"Yes, I did, on the occasion when he outraged me by asking for my daughter's hand."

"But this letter is dated several years ago."

"Certainly. I received it at the time of his father's appearance here."

"And you never showed it to him, nor gave him a chance to explain?"

"No," said Mr. Elmore, but with a little less of self-confidence. His friend's evident disapproval made him uncomfortable, even in the midst of his self-justification.

"Mr. Elmore," said Ansley gravely, "you have been a just and noble gentleman through most of your life, but in this matter it seems to me you have been neither just nor noble."

Mr. Elmore made no reply, and a silence fell between them. Ansley drew out a third cigar, cut it, lighted it deliberately, began to smoke, then at last broke the silence.

"What I don't understand," he said, "is why, when you did finally show him the letter, his explanation didn't put everything right and lead to harmony between you."

"Explanation?" said Mr. Elmore curtly. "He made none."

"So? I suppose not. I have never found him the kind of man who offers explanations. His idea is that his life should speak for itself. I have always found that it did, and most eloquently."

Something like a sneer crossed the clear-cut face opposite him. "You share the current infatuation, I know," Mr. Elmore said coldly. "Did it never occur to you that the absence of an explanation sometimes arises from the fact that there is none to offer?"

"Sometimes. Be that as it may, Horton could have refuted at least one of the charges in that letter. I can tell you something that does not sound like ingratitude." Earnestly and slowly he began to tell the story of the Glencoe bank failure, and of Bradford's part therein, warming to his subject till he was almost fiery in his emphasis at the close of the narrative.

"See, Mr. Elmore, what this man has done! In the last four years he has bought the house and paid for it to the last penny, the house in which now lives the woman who wrote that letter. He has given it by deed to her, without incumbrance. Besides this, he has given her every month the money on which she has lived and met her personal expenses. Ten days ago he made the last payment and sent the cancelled mortgage to this woman. You ask, why did he not resign three years ago? He remained here to earn the money to meet his obligations and to secure this woman a home, knowing all the time what a wrong her spite

had done to him. Now he has thrown up work he loved and has gone, God knows where, to get himself out of the sight of a man who could not recognize worth and manhood as exhibited before his eyes every day."

"Have you anything but his word for all this?" inquired Mr. Elmore skeptically.

"I have," said Ansley with heat. "As his business agent I handled the money."

The statement was convincing even to a prejudiced mind.

"Well," said the elder man reluctantly, "I must admit there has been great nobility in this conduct, especially when done by such a man as he. We seldom expect nobility from men of his class. For no matter what he's done, you can see for yourself, Ansley, that he's a man of no birth, probably of no name. The letter says it plainly enough. Besides, he told me himself that his father was that disreputable old vagabond whom he took such pains to bury. And as for his mother—well, we all know what she probably was. Could I have such a man as that marry my daughter? I am an Elmore, senator," he ended proudly.

The conversation closed there. Ansley had the information he wanted at first hand. There was nothing to do now but wait for a reply from Mrs. Horton. But when it came, some two days later, the Glencoe letter was written not by Mrs. Horton but by her daughter, and consisted only of the announcement of the mother's death after a continued feebleness of some weeks.

There was now nothing to prevent the delivery of the note from her to Mr. Elmore, but Ansley had a scheme of his own as to the time and place of the presentation. Morally certain of the explanation that the letter

would contain, he formed a plan that he felt would in no literal way break his promise to Bradford. He had promised to say nothing about his father; well, he would say nothing. Silence might be made to prove more expressive than words, and if the reasoning which led to his resolution was sophistical, he felt that the advantage to come to his friend who so well deserved it justified the sophistry. So the day after the word came from Mrs. Vanderbosch he called for Mr. Elmore at the bank, just at the closing hour, asking him to take a walk.

The day was lovely, the June fragrance alluring. They strolled along as if aimlessly, talking of widely varied subjects, until the green and quiet of Mount Logan Cemetery tempted them inside it. Wandering through the winding paths, they came, as Mr. Elmore thought unexpectedly, to a remote, inconspicuous corner where stood a lately erected granite block. "Have you happened to notice that, Mr. Elmore?" said Ansley, pointing it out casually.

The older man glanced at the inscription, then looked more closely, then read aloud, as if not crediting his own sight, the words engraven there:

"Erected in Memory
of
Anson Horton
and His Wife, Laura Salter,
by Their Son."

The face of the reader turned very pale. "Laura! My God!" was all he said. Passing around to the other side of the shaft, he read the simple words, "My mother." The two men stood with uncovered heads

for a moment. Mr. Elmore broke the silence. "I never knew she had a son, Ansley."

After another long, tense interval, "I suppose that is Bradford?" A moment later, "Was that old vagabond Anson Horton?"

Ansley nodded, still in silence.

"And you have known it all this time?"

"Yes."

"Why have you not told me long ago?"

"The secret was not mine to give, Mr. Elmore."

"But why did he not tell me, and put himself right in my eyes?"

"His father's dying wish was that you should not know to what he had come; he remembered your family's opposition to his marriage with Laura Salter. A man with the spirit of a Bayard will not break a promise to the dead. He compelled me also to keep his secret."

"Oh, I have been blind, blind!" groaned Mr. Elmore. Shaken and weak, he sat down upon a near-by stone and buried his face in his hands. "If I had not been possessed of an evil spirit I should have reasoned it out. But I thought Anson was dead—I never knew Laura had a son—and who could have recognized poor old Drum as the brilliant young man who married her? But I knew he went to the devil, and I might have put two and two together."

"Wasn't that exactly what you did do, my friend?" said Ansley with real pity for the heart-brokenness he had caused. "You put Drum and Rosalie Horton's letter together, and added them up wrong."

Mr. Elmore looked up. "Yes, it was the letter that misled me. What do you suppose, Ansley, could have been her motive for lying so?"

Ansley produced a sealed envelope. "Perhaps this will tell," he said. "She did not want it given you till after her death, thinking, I gather, that Bradford had succeeded in spite of her and unwilling to be humiliated in her lifetime. I had word of her death yesterday. She was not a woman of as noble character as the mother from whom Bradford inherited his."

Mr. Elmore was hardly listening; his mind was intent upon the letter.

"DEAR RICHARD:

"When you read this I shall be at rest. I could not bear to have you read it while I lived. I once wrote you a letter in which I did my adopted son Bradford great wrong. It was written in anger, and I am thankful to learn that my attempt to cause both you and him humiliation failed. I learn that his own record in Prestonbury has made for him the position I tried to keep him from. I am myself humiliated when I think of his wonderful goodness to me, in saving my home for me when the conduct of my own son had left me homeless.

"I want now to say what the truth was that underlay the false impression my letter was meant to convey. Bradford was indeed left on my door-step, as I wrote, but we knew all about who he was, for his father was my husband's brother Anson, whom you yourself knew, as he married your almost sister. You knew, too, Anson's record; he broke Laura's heart and had no means of bringing up her child, so we undertook it. There is no trait in Bradford like his father. You must have seen his likeness to his mother, and in many ways, too, he is like my husband.

"Rejoicing that you have been the friend you have to Bradford, and trusting that you will not think too scornfully of one who can do nothing more than this to make amends, I am yours remorsefully,

"ROSALIE M. HORTON."

The letter fluttered to the ground as Mr. Elmore dropped his hands helplessly to his side. "Blind and more than blind!" he murmured. "Oh, Ansley, what a blunder, what a perverse and stubborn blunder I have made! But," with a sudden arousing of the spirit in him that made him feel no circumstance could be too strong for his will, "I will set it right at once."

"You cannot, Mr. Elmore," said Ansley soberly. "Bradford has gone, you know, and left not a trace behind. He will be hard to find, if he has made up his mind not to be found."

They started homeward. Winding among the shrubbery that lined the walks, they came at a sudden turn face to face with Eleanor, the warm colour flooding the grave, sweet face that bent above an armful of June roses. Startled, she half turned as if to escape, but her father stopped her with a tenderness in his voice that had never been there even in the days of her girlhood, long past.

"The flowers are so beautiful, dear. Were you taking them yonder?" He pointed in the direction where lay the lonely grave.

She bowed her head in assent; in the sudden revulsion of feeling from hopelessness to hope she could not trust her voice.

"Come, dear. I will go back with you." His arm was lovingly about her. "I understand it all now, my poor Lennie. Can you forgive me?"

Ansley Jickers had not heard the last words; he had walked quietly away. His work was done. "I knew she would do that," he said to himself. "That's why I told her."

XXVIII

THE SINGER IN THE WOODS

THE second summer after that day when father and daughter stood together at the grave of old Anson Horton was the first that the Elmores spent in the new house on Jake's point. With some difficulty Mr. Elmore had persuaded the conservative German to part with his land and purchase elsewhere. The beautiful summer home which was erected on the site of the old farmhouse was Eleanor's, by her father's gift, and the name she gave it made of it a memorial—"The Shelter." When the fourth of the anniversary notes came that year, the recollection of the crisis that it signalized was all the more vivid, as she read it in the very place made dear to her by that storm and rescue so long past.

In the more than a year that had passed since Bradford Horton's departure nothing had been heard of him, and the silence which surrounded him seemed impossible to dissolve by any effort that could be made. Such efforts on Mr. Elmore's part were untiring, but beyond the railway terminus in New York, to which the ticket agent remembered that he had purchased transportation, no clew could be found by which to trace his movements.

The months of anxiety, of mental and sentimental struggle, had told heavily on Mr. Elmore, and he had aged rapidly. "If I had only known—if I would only have let myself see!" were the words oftener on his

lips than any others, and Eleanor, seeing his grief, forgot every feeling of resentment that had ever hardened her heart, put aside her own pain and loneliness and answered tenderly, day after day:

"Let it go, daddy dear. It will all come right some time. Bradford said that we would meet again. Don't grieve—that can't help any, and only makes it worse for me. Believe me, it will all come right."

But even as she comforted him, her loveliness, and his remembrance of how he had robbed her, would deepen his remorse, while at the same time it made him constantly more dependent on her strength.

Eleanor, too, had grown more than a year older in the year's time. Resolutely refusing to let her sadness sadden others, the effort at self-control made her strong, and her determined faith for a future of happiness somewhere kept her from bitterness. Those of her own circle who knew her secret wondered at her steady cheerfulness, at her interested sharing in all the pleasures of her friends. But in her letters Lucy Sleighton could sometimes detect an undertone of sadness, and Caroline Jickers had once or twice been her refuge and comforter when the uncertainty and strain became too hard to bear. Lucy, taking Caroline into her confidence, formed with her a conspiracy to persuade Eleanor to come to St. Paul for the rest and change that were really so much needed.

The plot was clever. Lucy invited Alice Jickers also to make her a visit; Joe promptly decided that he would accompany his wife and use the journey as a pretext for a hunting trip in northern Minnesota. The next move was to induce Charles Elmore to go with Joe, which left Charlie's mother free to spend the time of their absence at the house on Sunset Hill, Ansley

being in Albany. When Eleanor was offered the opportunity to make the journey to St. Paul by way of the lakes and in company with these three companions, and was assured that Caroline would take the best of care of Mr. Elmore, whom she had been reluctant to leave, the pressure of attraction was too great for her resistance. So it came about that the party of four set sail that October from Buffalo for Duluth.

At Mackinac, as they stood leaning over the rail while the steamer made its landing, among the people who came aboard from the quaint little fort village Eleanor's attention was caught by the sight of two men in hunting garb. At once she knew that a shuttle bearing a thread from the past was to fly across the web in the loom of her life. "Do you see that smooth-faced man in hunting costume?" she whispered to Joe.

"Next the military-looking chap with the British whiskers?"

"Yes. Keep him away from me all you can. He'll be up here in a minute."

"All right. Is he dangerous?"

"Not the way a gun is. He won't go off—that's the difficulty." She turned, as the hawsers were cast off, to leave the deck for her cabin, but not so quickly as to evade the man with the smooth face in the hunting dress. He had espied her as he came up the gang-plank and had wasted no time in making his way to the deck. As she turned he was before her with cap off and right hand extended. "May acquaintance begun in the old world be continued in the new, Miss Elmore?" she heard him say.

If Malcolm Stuart had thought her beautiful five years ago in Berlin, he knew she had never looked so superbly lovely as now, when she took the hand he of-

fered. "Between us," she said, "'auld acquaintance' should not be forgot. Let me present you to my friend Mrs. Jickers, Mr. Stuart."

Thus in a moment the party of four had been enlarged to one of six for the remainder of the journey. Sir Henry Joralemon, Stuart's companion, was an English merchant, who like many another of his race had risen to wealth by his own genius and industry. He was a man of forty-five, tall, heavily built and looked more like a general in undress uniform than like a civilian. His voice was smooth, his manners suave, and, although devoid of any sense of humour, he yet had a keen appreciation of the meaning of commercial facts. He was widely known in England as a man of large benevolence and had been knighted by the queen for the founding of an orphanage in London.

Ere half an hour had passed after the introductions, Joe, mindful of Eleanor's whisper, spoke suddenly to Charlie Elmore: "Your honour, wouldn't you like to see the guns of these two new malefactors?"

Sir Henry was astonished. He could not at all comprehend this remarkable phraseology. "Did I understand," he asked, "that you called the young gentleman 'your honour'? Is he not young to be a judge, then?"

"Counsel is in error. His honour is not too young to be the best judge of a foul ball among all our attorneys."

"And who is 'counsel,' Mr. Jickers?" asked Sir Henry, no less puzzled. "And what is a foul ball? I do not comprehend."

"Sir Henry, you are counsel, and a foul ball is one that wanders outside the lines of duty, and so does not count, you know."

"No, I don't know, you know. And how could a ball count?"

Malcolm Stuart was Scotch enough to appreciate a joke. "Sir Henry," he chuckled, when they had all stopped laughing, "you'll have to study Mr. Jickers a little, I fancy. But from what he says I understand he wants to see our guns."

"By all means," said the baronet, grasping with relief at a statement he could understand. "So that's what he means? But I don't see, don't you know, what my gun has to do with a foul ball."

The four men were gone on their tour of inspection a half hour, and when they returned to the bow the ladies had disappeared. At dinner, when the six next met, Eleanor managed to say to Joe, in passing, "That was well done, Joseph. Keep it up."

Accordingly, Joe proceeded to fasten himself to the two Englishmen, an arrangement with which Sir Henry was well content, finding himself extremely well entertained by the incomprehensible young druggist. Stuart had little chance to talk reminiscently or confidentially with Eleanor, as Joe controlled the conversation. Once, however, impatient of the situation, he asked very abruptly, "And how is my acquaintance of the Rigi, Miss Elmore?"

Joe's wife had not been Eleanor's confidant to no purpose. Joe was posted on the story of that last night in Berlin; he knew Stuart was sounding the girl to know whether the inopportune visitor on that occasion was still a rival to be feared. Before Eleanor could answer, and regardless of etiquette, he responded, "Counsel, the court does not know the name of the acquaintance of the Rigi. To answer what the court does not know is impossible."

Once more, unwittingly, Sir Henry helped Joe's purpose. "That's what I told you, Malcolm," he said in laughing complaint; "you can't comprehend him, don't you know?"

"Oh, yes, I can," said Stuart, a trifle annoyed at the interruption. "He wants to know the name of the man I met on the Rigi. I did not mention it, as I was sure Miss Elmore remembered the circumstance. It was Horton, Mr. Jickers." Then once more addressing Eleanor directly, he said what he was sure Joe could not reply to, "I wonder if he will happen along on this trip as unexpectedly as he did that last night in Berlin?"

It was a direct challenge, a deliberate effort to get at one jump back into the old relation, and Eleanor so understood it. The moment was painful to her. The rich colour flooded her face as she began, "I do not think ——"

"Pardon, counsel," interrupted Joe with his ready wit. "Court does not wish opposing counsel to know at this stage what counsel does not think. Court can tell what counsel thinks better than she can herself. This court, as well as counsel, has a case against Bradford Horton. He broke jail and escaped. He vamoosed. He decamped. He issued a writ of habeas corpus to himself, served it on himself and took away the body."

Once more the rich English coffee merchant came to Joe's aid.

"But how could he do that? I don't know, you know. He couldn't do such a thing as that, don't you know."

By the time this matter had been explained Eleanor and Charlie had gone up the deck together, and Stuart began for the first time to suspect that the girl was

eluding him and that the dapper little man was helping her play the game. So he accepted what he plainly saw was inevitable. He made no more effort towards Eleanor, but like the gentleman he was, helped her to enjoy the company of himself and his friend. The past was past. He would make no attempt to force it into the present. Eleanor saw that he saw and was proportionately grateful.

* * * * * *

It was on Saturday night, some two weeks later, that Joe and Charlie, with two guides, entered the camp of the Great Northern Lumber Company in upper Minnesota. It was the night of the week when the lumberjacks gathered in from their work for a night and day of recreation. There were more than a hundred of them—tough, hard, strong fellows, with no regard for God and but little for man. For law they cared nothing; each man was his own law. The one who could fell the most trees in a day and chop them into log lengths, the one who could drink the most whiskey without becoming intoxicated, the one who could tramp all night and chop all day, the one who dared to bet his whole pile on the game—this one was accounted the best man in the forest.

The guides with Joe and Charlie were Abram Hall and his son Jack. Abram was a man of large experience, knew every man in that section of the woods and any one for whom he vouched was welcome in any camp. He took Joe and Charlie to a small unoccupied bunkhouse. "Go in. Ye'll be safe. Nobody'll tech ye. Ef any feller does, ye holler for Abe Hall."

Jack made a fire and coffee and cooked supper, and after it the two went out among the pines. They heard

singing presently and started to get nearer. Meeting Abram, they asked him who was the singer.

"The mish'nary," he replied. "He's jest come in to-night. Most fellers calls him 'The Hooter.' I'm sorry he's come in."

"Why?" asked Charles Elmore.

"'Cause ye're down on yer luck. Thar won't be no circumstantial evidence goin' while the mish'nary's in. He busts the game every time."

"What do you mean by 'busting the game'?"

"Keepin' the jacks from gettin' bilin' drunk. Keepin' 'em from drawin' knives an' swingin' cant-hooks, an' all sich."

"Well, Abram, that's a good thing."

"No, sir, 'tain't. 'Twon't do fer nobody ter bust the game too often. Jacks wouldn't be jacks ef ye busted the game too often."

"What's the missionary's name? Where did he come from?"

"Where did he come from? Don't nobody know. He come in one night with a little wooden box, all fastened up tight. He was carryin' her in his hand by a handle. He sot that 'ar box down, an' opened her up, an' began punchin' her with his hands, an' trampin' on her with his feet, an' she begun to squeak out tunes. Next thing we knew he was a-singin' a tune. Yas, he was, a-singin', an' the jacks listenin'.

"An' I tell you he can sing. No jack never heerd no sich singin' afore. He went at it easy like, fust off, singin', 'I'm but a stranger here.' 'That's so. You'd better go to yer ma,' one jack hollered. 'Shut up,' roared another. 'I want ter hear that song. I used ter sing that in Sunday-school.' Wal, he went on tellin' 'bout heaven's bein' his home. 'Why don't ye go

home, sonny ?' called out a jack. Then the other jack hopped up and squar'd his fists, an' sez, 'You do that ag'in an' I'll bash yer face in.' Wal, the other feller simmered, an' then that singer yelled so every feller in camp jumped. He yelled way up high, 'Heaven is my fatherland,' an' ever sence the jacks has called him 'The Hooter.' "

"Does he preach ?" asked Charles Elmore.

"Preach ? Wal, that's the queer thing. I allus s'posed mish'naries preached, but he don't. Jes' talks —but by gum he's the durndest talker ever I see! Poker Bill kin talk, but the mish'nary kin give Bill the hull dickshunary an' then beat him fust showdown."

"What sort of talking ?" asked Charles Elmore.

"Yarns. Durndest yarns ever I heerd. 'Bout a feller makin' lame men walk an' deef men hear, an' all such as that. Tells 'em jes' 's though he b'lieved 'em. An' the jacks listen jes' 's though they was little boys a-listenin' to their mas."

"What did you say his name was ?" asked Charles Elmore again.

"Didn't say. Don't nobody know. Some feller asked him, an' sez he, 'Jes' call me the mish'nary. That's name enuff fer me.' "

As they talked they had been strolling nearer the spot from which the music had come, and now once more the voice of the singer rose, clear, sweet and strong, in the words, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Two of the three listeners started, with a surprised exchange of significant glances.

"Abram," said Joe, "take us round back of your missionary, so we can see him without disturbing him."

Making a circuit they reached a spot quite close to the little organ, but where they were unseen behind

some great trees. One glance was enough. "I knew there weren't two men alive with voices like that," said Joe. "Abram, we've seen your missionary before."

"Sh-h!" said the guide gruffly. "Don't ye hear he's a-talkin'?"

The speaker was already well into the midst of his talk, and from their vantage point they could hear every word.

"He was dead, boys," he was saying; "just as dead as Jimmie the Snipe when the big pine fell and the stake went through his body. There wasn't any doubt about Jimmie the Snipe, was there?" An emphatic shaking of heads answered. "Well, there wasn't any doubt about this man, either. His name was Lazarus. He died, I suppose, because when he was taken sick his doctor had gone away, miles away over a big river. Lazarus had two sisters, and they knew where the doctor had gone, and they sent after him, and finally he got there. But it was too late. The man was dead before the doctor reached the place where he lived. The funeral was over, too. He had been buried four days.

"They didn't dig graves in the earth in that country as we do. They cut big holes in the rocks and laid the dead bodies in on shelves, and put a big flat stone at the opening of the tomb to hold it safe. When the doctor got there he asked where they had buried his friend. So the girls took him out to show him. It was right in their own garden. Well, when the doctor saw it he felt mighty bad, and he said, 'Take away the stone.' And they said, 'Oh, no! He's been dead four days.' 'Take it away, I tell you,' said the doctor. So they took it away. Then that doctor prayed. Doctors don't do that very often. None of you ever saw a

doctor go to a dead man's grave and begin to pray. Well, he did. And then he called out loud, oh, very loud, 'Lazarus, come forth!' And what do you think? Out he came. Yes, he did, men. He came right out. I tell you they were happy, for that dead man had come to life. And they all went up to the house where the man had lived, and they had dinner. That doctor's name was Jesus, boys. Did you ever hear of Him before? Yes, you have. I've told you about Him."

And without a break he began to sing the second verse of the song already begun —

"Are you weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?"

As the dramatic recital of the story of the raising of Lazarus had been in progress, it had grown constantly harder for Joe to hold his enthusiasm in check. As the verse of the song finished he broke away from Abram's detaining clutch. "Let me go!" he ordered. "He's my long lost brother, I tell you, man!" And he ran out from behind the sheltering trees. With a mighty clap on the shoulder of the singer he spun that surprised young man square round, to look into the beaming faces of two friends he had not seen in what seemed far more than eighteen months.

"That's great, old chap!" Joe was crying excitedly. "That beats the best thing you ever did in Prestonbury! That beats Greek Testament, it beats banking, it beats anything! Shake hands, old man, shake hands!"

Around them there arose a hubbub of cries and remonstrances from the jacks, angry at the intrusion. "Get out o' here!" roared those nearest. "What ye

breakin' up our meetin' fer? Get out o' here, or we'll run ye up!"

"No, you won't, boys," Joe Jickers told them jubilantly. "The mish'nary won't let you touch me. I'm half a doctor myself, but that yarn the Hooter told beats the band. This Hooter's my friend. I know him. You don't. I'm going to tell you his name. He's Prof. Bradford Horton of Prestonbury, N. Y., and he's about the best fellow in the woods."

"That's all right. He's the best fellow, all right, but who the hell be ye? What ye breakin' up our meetin' fer?"

Bradford came to the rescue. "Hold on, boys," he said, and the men quieted at once. "This is a friend of mine, just as he said. He's told you my name; I'll tell you his. He's Joe Jickers. Not very big in body, but his heart's as big as that of any jack in the woods; big as Abe Hall's; big as Poker Bill's. Come and shake hands with my friends, Joe Jickers and Charlie Elmore. Then I'll sing."

Joe was equal to the occasion. He knew men by intuition, and he said just the right thing in the right way to each of the men who crowded up. The hand-shaking over, Bradford said, "Now, boys, close right up, and any fellow that knows the song I am going to sing, pipe up, too." He sounded the note on the little organ, and, standing under the great old trees, he, a homeless man, led those homeless men in the dearest of all songs to a man who has once known what the word home means, "Home, Sweet Home."

There was dead silence under the pines when the music died away. In that hush Horton's voice, low, sweet, tender, began the old prayer whose first words are, "Our Father." Then, "Good-night, jacks," he

said. "Don't fight to-night. Let the cards go to-night. To-morrow's Sunday, and I want my friends here to see you all sober in the morning. Will you promise?"

"You bet!" came back the roar from all around him as he turned to go with Joe and Charlie to their bunkhouse, a much surprised but very happy man.

XXIX

TIDINGS FROM THE FOREST

WHEN, long after midnight, Bradford Horton left his friends and departed to his own cabin, he was informed of all that had happened in Prestonbury since his departure. He had learned for the first time of his mother's death, and of its important consequence to him in Mr. Elmore's change of attitude.

"He knows now," his thoughts ran as he sat down alone in his lantern-lighted hut, "he knows how unfair he was, how cruelly hard he was and how absolutely true I was. Eleanor always knew it. Bless her dear heart! She believed in me in spite of her father. Ah, well, we might have been very happy, she and I, in that house on Branscombe's point. It can never be now. Now that I'm free, as far as her father's concerned, to tell Antigone I love her, I'm not free in another way. I mustn't ask her. I cannot ask her to come to a log cabin in a forest, and here's where I must stay, for here God sent me. I could tell Professor Dragham now to what I was called; I've enough 'sum of direction' to show it."

Then, as the face of his dreams rose before him, wistful pleading in the lustrous eyes, he dropped his head on his arms on the table with a groan.

"Oh, Antigone, am I breaking your heart too? I'm yours; I'll always be yours. But I cannot leave my work even for you. It may be thus God will have me

atone for my father's sins. But, dear one, it's far harder to give you up when it's only at the word of my own conscience, of my own will, than when circumstances forced us apart. God is stronger even than your father."

For a moment he sat so, then rose resolutely. "This will not do," he said. "I have work to do for my jacks to-morrow." He was ready presently for his hard, bone-racking bunk, and into it he crawled and slept like a little child till morning. The struggle was over.

"Uncle Joe, let's take Professor Horton home with us," was Charlie's first utterance in the morning.

"My boy, did you ever try to drive a pig through a gate when he didn't want to go?"

"But Professor Horton isn't a pig."

"He's worse, your honour. He's a man with a stubborn will and a noble purpose, and a conscience that rules him as if he had neither will nor purpose. Oh, I know him! But I'll try."

The trying, however, was in vain. All their arguments aimed to induce Horton to leave the camps and go back to civilization with them were without avail. Only one satisfaction did Joe secure—the promise that the "mish'nary" would not leave his present field without informing his friends of his whereabouts. He had, indeed, no longer the same reason for silence and concealment that had sent him away from Prestonbury to hide from all who knew him. He sent out three letters, when his friends left the woods; one to his sister, one to Sleighton and one to Barney O'Toole. In all their talk no allusion had been made to the state of affairs between himself and Eleanor Elmore. Joe had not known the details of the dénouement of Bradford's identity, and had told only the bare fact of Mr.

Elmore's change of heart. About more intimate matters Joe's delicacy was too great to let him speak, and Horton was not a man to betray his feelings. He was becoming more and more the still, strong man.

On Monday, when the two hunters left the camp, Abram Hall tramped with them as far as Fairthorne. "So ye fellers knowed the Hooter?" he remarked, almost as soon as they started.

"Yes," answered Charlie, "we've known him almost ten years. He used to be my teacher, and he lived at my mother's house two years."

"I swan!" said Abram briefly. "What sent him in here a-hootin'?"

Joe answered this question. "Oh, he's different from most fellows, Abe. He don't act like any fellow you know. If there's anything you want him to do he won't do it. And if there's anything you don't want him to do that's the thing he'll do, first chance he gets. But he can sing, Abram Hall. The court says he can sing."

"Ye bet, Mr. Jickers," was Abram's laconic reply.

"He'll spoil his voice singing as he does out here in the open air," continued Joe.

"P'haps that's so, boss. But he won't spile no jacks doin' it. It don't spile jacks to get gin out on 'em, an' that's what he's doin'. An' he's goin' ter build a mish'nary house in here, too. A reg'lar gospel bunk, ye know. But, Lordy, he don't need no mish'nary house. The big bunkhouse an' outdoors is all he needs fer singin' an' yarnin'. But he's got an idee that he wants a mish'nary house, an' he's goin' down ter St. Paul ter git the quaderlater'ls."

"The what?"

"The quaderlater'ls. Them's the things ye write

onto, an' shove 'em inter a bank winder, an' ye kin git money on 'em if ye've got any feller what knows ye, an' he's got any spondulics ter make 'em good if ye bust yer helve."

Joe and Charlie laughed. They laughed so long that old Abram grew incensed.

"What yer laughin' at? I don't see nothin' ter laugh at."

"Laughing at? To see how fine you've got the whole money business down. You can give points to fellows that want to borrow money. It isn't the fellow that wants the money that counts. It's the backer with the spondulics, Abram."

"Ain't quaderlater'ls no good?"

"Yes, of course they're good. And so are squares and triangles, when you have a backer with spondulics. You'd make a good cashier for a bank, Abram."

Abram was in a measure mollified. "Ye kin laugh an' poke fun at me all ye want ter, but it's so. He's goin' down ter St. Paul. He'll git them quaderlater'ls. He allus gits what he goes fer. Goin' down next week, the jacks sez."

That put a new phase on affairs. "I wonder," said Joe, after Abram had left them, "why Horton said nothing about coming down."

"'Tis funny," agreed Charlie. "Didn't you tell him the girls were there?"

"I did." He paused a moment. "I offered that as an inducement for him to come out with us." Suddenly he slapped his knee. "And there, your honour, the court blundered—blundered badly. Court should have reserved sentence till the prisoner appeared at the bar. Of course, Charles, my boy, if he's going to stick like a high-minded lunatic there at that noble work in

the woods he won't want to see Eleanor Elmore and get all harrowed up thinking of what he's losing. He didn't say he was coming to St. Paul for fear we'd keep her over. You see, I said we were going home next week."

"Maybe we can stay over, anyway, and she'll be there when he comes."

"Charles, my boy, you've got a long head," said Joe solemnly. "Like enough your Aunt Eleanor can get him to stay out of the wilderness, if she once gets a chance at him. But, Charles, don't you tell any one that we've seen Brad. Let me manage that. You tell all about the hunt. I'll tell about the find. See?"

The hunters were down in time for dinner on Wednesday night. At table Joe was quiet, until Charlie had told the story of the time in the forest, when suddenly he broke in:

"And say, your honour, he's not going to run away again. He's going to stay right there and do his day's work. The only thing that will get him out will be quaderlater'ls."

"Joe, talk sense," said his wife. "There are no such things as quadrilaterals, except in the geometry books. And who are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about the Hooter—the 'mish'nary,' as old Abram calls him. Old Abram was our guide. He says there are such things as quaderlater'ls, and they're things you write on, and shove into bank windows and get money on, if you've got a backer."

They all laughed at that. Then Eleanor asked, "Who is the Hooter, Joe?"

"I cannot tell a lie, your honour. The Hooter is Prof. Bradford Horton, formerly of Prestonbury and now of the big woods up above Fairthorne."

Every eye at the table was fastened on Joe. No one spoke for a moment. Eleanor turned pale; then the red blood swept up from her heart, suffusing her whole face. "Joe, don't joke with me," she said. "Have you seen Bradford Horton?"

"Yes, Lennie. Charles and I have seen him, have spent two nights and the intervening day in a lumber camp where he is working as a self-constituted home missionary, and he's coming down to St. Paul to get Austin to help him raise money."

"Did you know that, Austin?"

"No, Eleanor; not until Joe brought me a letter from him."

"For what does he want money?"

"To build a mission house in the camp where I saw him. Gin flows up there, rivers of it, and Bradford wants a good bright, cheery place by which to hold his crowd together and keep them away from the gin mill Saturday nights and Sundays, whenever he happens to be in camp. There's two camps—one on the far north side of the woods. We didn't see that. Bradford runs both of them, and I tell you he does it in great shape."

Then Joe told the story of the meeting of Saturday night, and how easily and tactfully Bradford handled the lawless men of his self-appointed parish. "Austin," he ended, "I guess you'll have to help him raise that money."

"Lennie," said Joe later that evening, when she had regained part of the poise that his story had so shaken, "you'll stay till next week, now, won't you? I couldn't persuade him to leave this enterprise he's started and come back to Prestonbury, but maybe you can. I wish you'd try, anyway. No one can get him

to stop preaching now he's started, but civilization needs his brains."

"Perhaps the lumberjacks need him, too, from all you say," she said, to Joe's total surprise. "Wait," as he started to interrupt. "I know that sounds as if I didn't care. Nothing would make me so happy as to have him back in Prestonbury, and father will never be fully at peace till he sees him and makes amends. But I can't feel it's right just for my own sake to ask him to give up a work that needs him. Anyway, he wouldn't —I know him too well," she added proudly. "Nothing can make him stop the thing he's begun until he finishes it. But as to staying, I am willing, if you and Alice wish. I should be glad to see him again," with a deeper note in her voice.

On the day that the two hunters had left Horton's camp he himself had started northward to spend the last of the week in the northern camp, and while the people in St. Paul were discussing him and his work, he was discussing it with others in a very practical way.

The two Englishmen who had been with the Prestonbury party to Duluth had turned their steps southward and found their way by midweek into this northern camp. The experience of Joe and Charlie was repeated for Stuart and Sir Henry, and no two men were ever more astonished. The singer charmed Sir Henry, and the recognition of Stuart and Horton was, of course, instant and mutual. At the first opportunity they sought each other out.

"Our meetings," said Bradford as he greeted the stranger, "seem fated to be in strange places and at unexpected times—the Rigi, Berlin and now the heart of the wilderness."

"I hardly know," declared the Scotchman, "which

feeling is uppermost this time—astonishment or admiration."

"You are speaking of the work here, I suppose. I am astonished myself at its development. It is about all that counts with me now."

"My astonishment, I must confess, was that you left the comfort of the professorship you said you held for such hardships as this mission must entail. What led you to it?"

As soon as he said it, Stuart realized that his question must seem almost an impertinence.

"Circumstances," was Bradford's brief reply, in a tone that forbade further inquiry.

"Poor fellow!" thought the other. "He's met the fate I would have had I been able to ask that girl to marry me."

"I met some friends of yours recently," he went on after a pause. "I came west on the same boat with them—a Mr. and Mrs. Jickers, and Miss Elmore and her nephew."

"I knew they had come west."

"Singular, how unexpectedly people meet in this world. I found Mr. Jickers a very amusing character."

"He is all that and much more. He is a genuine man."

"Sir Henry thought Mr. Jickers quite perplexing, quite inexplicable, in fact."

Bradford smiled. "I can readily understand that," he said. "Did you hunt with them?"

"No, we separated at Duluth. The ladies went to St. Paul and the men to the south. We are on our way to St. Paul now to spend two days. Sir Henry wishes to see some of your American cities. How long have you been in here, Mr. Horton?"

"A year and a half."

"Are you never going out?"

"Oh, never is a long time. I shall stay until I get two mission houses built—one here and one in the southern camp. Then I may go out for a visit, but my work is here. I shall return to it."

Up to this point Sir Henry had been a listener only. Now he spoke suddenly. "I have been greatly interested by the service to which we came. I would gladly know more about your work. Can you take time to tell me of it?"

"Certainly. Come to my cabin, and I will tell you the whole story."

In the hour that followed Sir Henry found he had met a man of his own stamp—a man who having seen something that needed to be done believed that he could do it, and having begun was not going to be driven from it until he had succeeded. For such a man he had great admiration. "To see a young man like you," he said heartily, "with courage to attempt so hard a thing as this gives me a new belief in the goodness of humanity."

The outcome of the conversation was Sir Henry's offer of the money for the building of one of the houses. Bradford was overjoyed. He had hoped, by hard work and eloquent pleading, to secure the ten thousand dollars he needed from the churches in St. Paul; now the amount to be so raised was cut in half, and he had to offer as incentive to the generosity of others the fact that the first giver was a stranger of foreign birth who saw the work and believed in it.

The night when the two Englishmen reached St. Paul was Saturday of the week when Joe and Charlie had returned there. In the vestibule of Rev. Mr.

Sleighton's church, on Sunday morning after the service, the Prestonbury men encountered their acquaintances of the lakes, who had come to hear the popular young preacher. In the chance meeting Joe acquired information enough to make him radiant with enthusiasm when he met the rest of the family at dinner.

"Your honour," he began, though addressing no one in particular, "there are complications about this Bradford Horton business. While you all went to Sunday-school counsel and I, being unregenerate, have been making discoveries. We saw the big Englishman and the Scotchman, your honour—the ones that were going hunting. Well, they hunted in Brad Horton's camp, not the one where we were but the northern one, and Brad told them all about his plans and the Scotch Englishman, or the English Scotchman, told counsel that the big Englishman was going to pay for one of those mission houses and that Brad said when he got them both built he was going to take a vacation and get out among people for a rest. Now what do you think of that?"

"I think if Brad comes to St. Paul with that story he'll get the rest of the money," answered Sleighton.

"He could get it without coming to St. Paul," said Eleanor quietly. As they turned to look at her, asking how, they saw a peace and gladness in her face that had not been there since Joe's return early in the week. Since then her struggle had been unremitting, between the longing to use her influence to persuade Bradford to give up his work and come home, and the knowledge that such a course was both selfish and untrue to his highest good. Now it seemed that all was to work out so that the sacrifice she was striving so painfully to make would not be asked of her.

"How?" she answered the queries of the others. "Why, daddy will give the money the minute I tell him. I'll telegraph for it!" There was a glad ring in her voice. "If he gets the houses built this winter, he can come out in the spring for his vacation, and daddy can see him, and be happy again."

"I don't believe you ever think of yourself, do you?" asked Lucy as they left the dining-room.

"Myself? Oh, Lucy, that's too deep! You know, don't you?" Her face was all aglow with happiness in anticipation of the meeting soon to come that was to be unmarred by thoughts of renunciation.

Next morning early there came a telegram from Ansley Jickers to Eleanor, saying, "Your father is very ill. Hasten home."

XXX

THE APPEAL OF THE CAMP

"HELLO, Brad!"

"How are you, A. S.?"

"Fine! Weather good, plenty to eat, conscience quiet. Glad to see you; mighty glad." Not a change was apparent in the manner of the two men who had not seen each other for five years. Sleighton looked prosperous; Horton was not so well dressed as formerly, but the look of victorious accomplishment on his bronze face was fine to see.

"God has led me to a wonderful work, A. S.," he said, after the first greetings were over and the visitor had settled down in one of the minister's leather study chairs.

"I knew He would," said Sleighton. "But, Brad, I never supposed it was in you to do what you're doing, I must admit that. If I had, I'd have put two and two together long ago."

"Two and two? What two and two?"

"Lumberjacks and Brad Horton."

"I don't understand."

"You weren't so dumb in the old days. I've been hearing for six months of a missionary up in the forest above Fairthorne who was a great gospel singer and a splendid worker among the lumbermen. No one ever gave me his name, and I couldn't place any such man.

And all the while it was you. What sent you up there?"

"You."

"Never! I've never done so good a thing."

"Yes, you did. Remember how I asked you once all about Fairthorne, where it was and how to get there and how far off the woods were?"

Sleighton recalled it.

"I didn't mean anything then, in asking, but when circumstances made it necessary for me to leave Prestonbury and go where no one could find me, what you had said came back to me. I went in by way of Duluth. I had no board back of me, and the reason you couldn't find out the name of the man you heard of was because I never gave any. For a year and a half now I've had no name but the 'mish'nary' and 'the Hooter.' So you see, A. S., you did send me into the woods, you and God. I was ready," he added, "to take you into my confidence when J. J. found me. I wanted to come down here after money, as I wrote you, and I knew you'd keep my secret. Now, of course, there's no need of secrecy."

It was Saturday evening. Bradford had arrived that afternoon, several days after the departure of the Prestonbury party. Little by little, as they sat together far past midnight, Horton told his friend the story of the past five years.

"I don't blame Mr. Elmore," he ended. "He was only God's instrument to reveal me to myself. Instead of getting out into real work, for men, I had buried my real power in a Greek dictionary and was playing fast and loose with myself. The only thing really before me was the vision of a girl, though I tried to make myself believe it wasn't. I dreamed, hoped—oh, well,

Austin, there's no use going into it all, but that night he refused my request so brutally I was almost heart-broken. I loved Antigone, A. S.; I always shall. But in my soul, that night, underneath all the rage and bitterness, I heard God's voice as plainly as ever prophet heard it, saying, 'Now, will you go do the work to which I have called you?'

"I had an awful night. It was days before I could surrender and say I'd go. I resolved then that as soon as I'd paid off the mortgage I'd hide myself away in some place where I could be unknown and at the same time serve God and men. Then when the storm came, and the rescue, I had the knowledge to strengthen me that Eleanor loved me. She always will, Austin. But to answer the call of God means separation for her and me, even now when all other obstacles are removed. She will go her way and I mine, and my way is plainly here at work. I will not be a traitor to God's call again, not even for her sake. And it is much to know she loves me—we are wedded already in soul."

There was dead silence for a time, then Sleighton said, emotion in his voice, "You are a strong man, Bradford Horton. For strong men God has great use and great reward."

Then, with a quick turn of subject to relieve the overwrought feelings of both by a return to practical matters, he fell to laying plans for the services of the morrow.

The Sunday when Bradford Horton told of his work in the camp of the Great Northern Lumber Company was as fair a November day as ever shone crisp and cold upon the world. From the pulpit the missionary surveyed his audience, thinking, "What will such a people care for my stories of the jacks, of Poker Bill,

of Jimmie the Snipe? Nothing, probably; but I'll tell them all the same. The duty is mine, the cause is God's."

He had not counted on his own power, however; in fact, he was hardly aware of it. In simple words he narrated the history of the year and a half he had spent as a part of the life of these men. He told of their separation from the outside world, of their hardships, of their rough, wild, reckless ways; told of their gambling and drunkenness, of their profanity and utter disregard of the Sabbath, of their absolute lack of fear of God, man or devil; told how little by little they were being won to sobriety and an outward semblance of respect for holy things.

"That southern camp," he said in closing, "will in ten years be a city. The railway from Duluth to Fairthorne will pass through both the northern and southern camps within the next year and a half. In that whole vast region I am the only minister. Settlers are already coming in and will need religious influences. We must have two buildings for mission work, one for each camp, and must have them at once. One is promised as soon as I can obtain the money for the other. An Englishman who passed through the camp two weeks ago saw the work and was so impressed by the reality of our needs that he pledged himself to give five thousand dollars for this purpose. Will you give the other? Here is the field in your own state. A foreigner will give half the money for the work. Will you meet him? In the language of Poker Bill, 'that Englishman calls you.' Will you show him that you also hold a full hand?"

As he took his seat, Sleighton rose. "I will answer that last question," he said. "I will answer, No, for

that purpose this church will not give one dollar." Bradford started, but was reassured as his friend went on, "I have the promise of the money for the second house in my hand." He opened a telegram, and read, "'Tell Bradford Horton that Prestonbury will build the second mission house.'"

Bradford was on his feet, but the minister stopped him with a word in an undertone.

"The houses will be built this winter," Sleighton went on, still addressing the people. "But more than mere houses is needed. They should each have a preacher. My friend should no longer bear the whole burden. He must be our missionary superintendent. Such an arrangement will require twenty-four hundred dollars yearly; six hundred for each minister, twelve hundred for Mr. Horton. That is the responsibility which I ask you this morning to assume. Will you?"

A man in the congregation was already on his feet. "Yes," he cried. "I will be responsible for that sum. Any one who wants to help may report to the First National Bank." And before he could take his seat, involuntarily the congregation had risen in one body and were singing for the second time during that service, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow!" And clear and strong above the voices of the people rose that of Bradford Horton.

"A. S.," said the missionary, when at last the stream of people who wished to meet him had flowed out at the church door and the two were walking home together, "had you received that message when we were talking last night?"

"Sure!"

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I wanted to do better than we could if you'd known. I wanted it all to work out as it did this morning. I knew my crowd. Now, then, can you get those houses done by June, think you?"

"I'll have to let Sir Henry know the first thing."

"Well, write him to-night. Then hustle back to the woods and get to work, and be ready to come out for a rest in June. I'm going on to Prestonbury in May, to commencement, and I'll find two good fellows to put on the job and take your place."

"I don't specially want a vacation after such an inspiration as I've had to-day."

"You'll want it, all right. The winter's long and hard out here, and it's no joke building houses in the snow. Besides, they want you in Prestonbury. The kindest thing you can do for Eleanor Elmore is to let her father see you and make his peace."

"I know," said Bradford, with reserve. "Yes, I must go East for that."

"See here, Brad!" said Sleighton earnestly. They had reached home and Lucy was in the hall to greet them. "Give up that nonsense about never marrying. That girl will go with you to China, if you'll ask her."

"Would that be the way to prove I love her?" said Bradford stubbornly; "to ask her to share such hardships as you've just been talking about—long, cold winters, and isolation, and loneliness? It's not my way. I love her too well for that. I want to see her again, yes; but it must be the last time."

Lucy had been quiet, listening without comment. Now she spoke. "You don't know Eleanor, Bradford," she said simply.

XXXI

"MY SON! MY SON!"

MR. ELMORE, as the telegram to his daughter had said, was indeed very ill; pneumonia the doctor had called it. But as Eleanor entered his room, after her hurried journey East, his face lighted to a smile. Her presence seemed to give new hope to the entire household, and the sick man, satisfied now that his daughter had reached home before his life spark had gone out, experienced at once a change for the better as a result of the satisfaction. The physician was surprised next morning, still more surprised the following one, and on the third day he said to Eleanor, "You are a better doctor than I. Your father will recover, I think."

By the end of the week the invalid was able to talk a little. "Dearie," he said on Saturday morning, "has Bradford been found? I dreamed he was coming back to Prestonbury."

"Yes, father," she answered. "Joe and Charlie happened upon him in the forest where they went to hunt."

"And he's here? They brought him home?" came the eager questions.

"No, dear. He couldn't come just now. He's made his home up there in the Minnesota lumber camps among the lumbermen. He's a missionary there."

"His home?" There was a note of disappointment in the feeble voice. "Is he married, then, Lennie?"

"No, dear. He's all alone, except for the men. He's had a wonderful experience and done a wonderful work. He's trying now to build two mission churches—one in each of the camps where he works. He has the money for one; that Englishman I wrote you was with Malcolm Stuart gave it. I thought maybe you'd want to give the money for the other. Wouldn't you like to? If you would I'll send Austin a telegram."

"Yes, Lennie; by all means." The weak voice had grown almost strong with its pleasure. "I'd have given them both if I'd known. This will help, don't you think so," he added wistfully, "towards making things right with Bradford?"

"Surely, daddy dear. Things will all come right by and by. The crooked places are being made straight, the rough places plain."

She spoke with a confidence to which she had to use all her will power to cling. Reconciliation was sure to come between her father and Bradford, yes; but how would that smooth the roughness of her life, while Bradford's work kept him in the wilderness, which she knew he would not ask her to share? None the less, there was real happiness for her in sending the telegram which Sleighton read from his pulpit that Sunday.

From the hour of that conversation Mr. Elmore's recovery was rapid. Before Christmas came he was back in his accustomed place in home and business, and one of his first acts was to forward to Bradford the promised sum. The letter that came in acknowledgment was prompt and satisfactory:

"DEAR MR. ELMORE:

"I have just received through Mr. Sleighton the five thousand dollars which you so generously sent to aid in my building enterprise. I shall be able now to

finish speedily work which is of great importance. I would like to add that Joe Jickers, whom I saw here in the autumn, informed me that you had learned the truth concerning my father and myself, and much as I value the gift of money for my work, I value it far more highly as evidence of your renewed belief in me.

"Most sincerely yours,

"BRADFORD HORTON."

It was not until spring that any further word came directly to Bradford Horton from Prestonbury. Then it came in the shape of a letter from Charles Elmore, asking him to officiate at that young man's marriage to Helen Tappan. Neither of them, it seemed, would allow themselves to be married by any one else. The letter found Horton just at a time when he could clearly see the end of his task, and when he knew that in kindness to both Eleanor and her father he must visit Prestonbury at least long enough for the interview Mr. Elmore so much desired. That it meant for him a struggle he knew, even when he wrote his acceptance of Charlie's invitation. "I wonder," he thought as he mailed it, "if I am strong enough to look into those eyes again and keep the resolution I have made."

In the meantime, Eleanor received a long and entertaining letter from Lucy Sleighton, which included among its other news the statement of Bradford's intention to come East at the time of the wedding. This letter arrived even before Charles received the reply to his and fully set at rest the fear his aunt had felt lest Bradford Horton after all would not feel that he could leave his work as yet. Hardly daring to let herself hope for what she longed for, she had discouraged Charlie from writing. "He'll never come away for so trivial a thing as a wedding," she said, upon which

Charlie had indignantly denied that his wedding was a triviality.

Lucy's letter quieted the doubts that the winter without direct word from the Minnesota camps had aroused. "Now, Eleanor Elmore," her friend wrote at its end, "don't you dare let him come back here without you. He says he won't ask you to share such hardships, so you'll have to make him, that's all. We told him he didn't know you, if he thought you'd mind, but you know how he is when he makes up his mind."

"The only trouble would be about leaving father," Eleanor said when she read the letter to Caroline. "I read him what Lucy says, and he said I should go with Bradford if he asks me. But, Carrie, he'll never ask me."

"He may change his mind," said her sister-in-law. "Father would miss you sadly, Eleanor."

"Did you ever know him to change his mind?" challenged Eleanor. "But," with the inconsistency of rebounding hope, "if he does, father says he don't care how much he might miss me; he doesn't want to make us suffer any more."

She did not think to tell Caroline not to repeat the little confidence. Caroline told her husband, and through him the statement Mr. Elmore had made came finally to the ears of Joe Jickers, where it stopped.

So at last June came. Before its last week Bradford Horton was on his way eastward. Each day of the long journey found him happier than the day before, even though each day the undercurrent of his resolutions flowed more turbulently. "I must not, no, I must not!" he repeated firmly; then, with a wavering thought that never finished itself, "and yet ——" he would add.

The home built by Barney O'Toole after his marriage to Mary Tappan, two years before, was two miles away from the house on Sunset Hill. Horton was to stay with the O'Tooles while he remained in Prestonbury, and when the station carriage set him down before their door, just at nightfall, three days before the wedding, everything was in readiness for the honoured guest.

Barney came bounding out like a boy. "Oh, Brad, this is great! I was never so glad to see you before in all my life."

"Hello, Barney!" Bradford wrung his hand. "Cash balance all right to-day?"

"Not short a dollar. How are you?"

"Tired; happy; hungry as a bear."

"Well, we'll soon fix that. Here's Mary," as the Miss Tappan of the old days came forward to welcome him. "Charlie and Helen are here for dinner, and Joe and Alice are coming this evening. Joe said he wanted to be sure that the wrong malefactor had not been extradited."

"Same old Joe, isn't he?" Horton laughed. "I guess he'll die joking."

On the porch after dinner, in answer to O'Toole's offer of a cigar, Bradford produced a well-worn pipe. "I'll burn this instead, thank you, Barney," he said. "I formed this friendship in the lumber camps, and many a night my pipe has kept me from being blue." He was the picture of embodied comfort when the little druggist and his wife arrived.

The breezes always began to blow in the vicinity of Joe Jickers. He was a veritable son of Æolus. "Hello, Hooter," was his salutation in the old way. "But this time we shan't have to sing, 'Where Is My Wandering Boy To-night?' Nary! Court recog-

nizes his long lost brother. How's Poker Bill, Hooter?"

Mrs. Barney made answer instead of Horton. "Stop your nonsense, Joe. The professor has promised to sing for us, and we're going in to the piano, now you've come."

"All right, counsel. Court sustains the objection. But court makes an order that Brad has to tell about his first song in camp; about being a pilgrim and a stranger, and about why Poker Bill called him 'the Hooter,' and then he's to sing us all about heaven being his home, and let us see if Bill was right."

Bradford laughed, as they all did, but before he had told the story through they were serious enough to be ready for his singing of the simple hymn which has comforted so many weary souls and which had won for him his place in the lumber camps.

After that he stayed at the piano for half an hour, passing without interruption from song to song, as if the singing were the outlet of an overcharged heart. Pausing finally, "Pardon me, Mrs. O'Toole," he said, "but a parlour, a piano and people of your sort is a combination that has been denied me so long that I was heart-hungry and, I fear, selfish."

"Counsel," said the druggist solemnly, "you have vindicated your right to be called the Hooter."

Mr. Elmore called next morning to take the guest for a drive. The meeting of the two men was characteristic; the younger was undemonstrative, the older courteous. After driving for a while about the familiar streets of the beautiful town, they turned finally into Mount Logan Avenue, when suddenly Mr. Elmore's purpose became evident to his hitherto almost silent companion. The carriage stopped near the seques-

tered nook over in the shadows of the cemetery, and together they walked to the spot now sacred to them both, where they stood with uncovered heads for a time, still silent. At last, very gently, the old man spoke.

"Bradford," he said, "I have chosen this place in which to make such atonement as I can for my sin. Your poor father's body lies here by the side of your mother, my foster sister, whom I dearly loved. They cannot hear me now, but God can, and you. In bitterness of soul you said once that you would never speak to me again, and for years, until to-day, you have kept your promise. I cannot blame you. But I ask you now, will you forgive me? Forgiveness will not undo the past, and words and sorrow are all that here I can offer you. All that I ever said to you in harshness I wish to unsay. Bradford, will you forgive me?"

The young man's extended hand was his first answer, and with strong hand-clasp the two so long sundered by misunderstanding faced each other in silence for a moment. Then a soft, strong voice said, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

Then, as Bradford's voice failed him and broke, the old man threw his arm around the young man's neck. "My son!" he cried. "My son!" The implication of the words was a thought that even in the moment of high-pitched emotion Bradford resolutely put away from him. Not even Mr. Elmore's wish could make his path different from that he had resolved upon.

The words that came as they walked back to the carriage were a revelation to Bradford Horton that flooded the past unhappy years with light. "You

never knew," said Mr. Elmore, "that I was once engaged to your adopted mother when she was Rosalie Morwell. The affair was a boy's and girl's first love, and I suppose it was largely my fault that it was broken, and she had resented that all the years. Your first call on me brought all the past freshly to mind, and that dreadful letter of hers was written mostly to humiliate me, and in answer to a note I wrote that night you called, hoping to reconcile you and her to each other. Ah, well!" he sighed, as they started for the drive back into town, "the outcome of it has been almost ten years of sorrow for you; but through it all you have been noble, Bradford, far nobler than I ever was in my best moments."

Stopping at the bank, where Bradford wanted to see his old haunts, he found a note which had come to Barney. Bradford read the note and tossed it to O'Toole. "Mrs. Elmore wants me to dine to-night."

"Good enough!"

"Can't be done," said Bradford briefly. "There's the wedding rehearsal to-night."

"That's not till 8 : 30. Besides, some of them will be going to the church, too. You'd better go; they're anxious to see you."

Hardly convinced that he would do well to accept, Horton left the bank and wandered over to the seminary, which he found closed and locked. Unable to seek out his old room, he sat down on the steps where he had so often sat with Sleighton, and the old day-dreams came back to him. Rousing himself suddenly with determination from his contemplation of the old vision of a graceful girl with lustrous eyes, he shook himself into active purpose.

"This won't do, Brad," he said to himself. "You're

getting ready to have every pin on your alley go down at the first bowl. Come out of it! You'll have to see her sooner or later and you might as well go now and get it over."

So when the Elmore carriage called at Barney's that evening for Bradford, he was ready in the shabby best suit which was all he had for occasions great and small.

If a memory visited him on that two-mile drive of the last time he had entered the house on Sunset Hill, the grim outline of it was erased by the welcome he received from the waiting family. Truly, things had changed. Eleanor, at the library door, feeling shyly that she must wait for him to make the advance, if he ever should, lost, in the sudden consciousness of his presence, all sense of reserve, all thought of everything except that he was there at last and that she loved him, and came to him with both hands out, her transfigured face upturned to meet his kiss.

There came no stinging rebuke from her father, as Bradford stooped and took her in his arms. Instead, his own soul was on fire, and a thrill went through him that made him first hot, then cold. Only by summoning every power in his soul that made for self-possession could he keep from the surrender of every one of his heroic resolutions, and putting her gently from him turned to accept with heartiness Mrs. Elmore's kindly greeting.

If Eleanor, at once overjoyed and trembling with suspense lest what she feared might be true and he should go away without a word, took little share in entertaining the guest, there was no lack of conversation. Skillfully Mr. Elmore led the talk that enlivened the dinner, drawing from Bradford details none of them had known about his beginnings in Pres-

tonbury—lamp story and all, even to the mention of the quarter of an hour that he had spent upon the carriage stone before their house on that first day of his arrival. The reminiscent chat ran on through dinner and back into the library, where Mr. Elmore said at last:

"Bradford, when this wedding is over, your visit with our cashier will be done, and we all want you here for our guest for as long as you will stay. This is your home now and always, I want you to be sure."

Bradford braced his will for the effort he had known would come. "You can never understand," he said, with the cool indifference which he had found was his only means of defense against his own emotions, "how much I appreciate this invitation, nor how hard it is for me to decline it." Eleanor's face turned white; he saw it, saw her hands pressed together, but he went steadily on. "I leave the morning after the wedding for Glencoe. I haven't seen my sister for five years, and I've promised her to be there that night."

"What?" said Mr. Elmore disappointedly. His back was towards his daughter, where she sat, half in shadow. "Is this all the visit you will give us, just this one night at dinner?"

From behind him there came an echo in a shaking voice. "Is this——" The father turned and saw his daughter's face. As the catch came in her question he broke in, "But you've got to see the 'Shelter,' Lennie's house up at Jake's, you know. How long are you to be in Glencoe?"

"All through July, I expect. I want to tramp the old hills once more where I used to go in my boyhood." He tried to make his voice ring as if that were really his great desire, but he could feel the lack of sincerity

in his own words as he hurried on, "Then I must turn back westward to the camps, to my jacks, to the work to which God has called me."

There was conviction in the last words, but Mr. Elmore continued his plea. "But stop on your way West, my boy. Don't go without a sight of the 'Shelter.' Let us know what day you're coming and the *Antigone* will be at the foot of the lake, and you can row up to the house."

The final "No" for which he had steeled himself was on his lips when its utterance was checked. Eleanor had risen and come from shadow out into the full light of the lamps. From the wistful pleading of her lustrous eyes there flashed to his brain a new idea. Suddenly he saw that on the altar where he desired to sacrifice himself for her he was offering up instead the heart of the woman who, he saw in this moment of illumination, would count nothing a sacrifice, so that they might be together. Her voice joined the pleading of her eyes, and he heard her say, in simple repetition of her father's words, but with meaning far more profound, "Won't you come, Bradford? Won't you, please?"

After five seconds, that seemed to Bradford Horton like an eternity, so completely did his purpose change within their span, he found voice to speak.

"Yes, Eleanor," he said. "I will stop at the 'Shelter.' I think we both have suffered long enough." He turned to Mr. Elmore. "At the grave of my father and mother this morning you called me son. Did your words mean this?"

"Yes, my son," said Mr. Elmore, his face alight. Mrs. Elmore was crying quietly. "I built the 'Shelter' for you and Lennie."

She had slipped into the circle of his arm as to the

place she had waited for through weary years. "Dear," he said, looking down into the sweet face close to his, "this will mean hardship for you. It means loneliness, discomfort, privation for you."

"No, Bradford! No!" she cried joyously. "It means home, rest, peace. It means a hungry heart satisfied."

The curtain at the French window parted and Ansley Jickers entered unannounced from the porch. "I just stopped in," he began, "to take Lennie —— Oh!"

THE END

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